

The University of Chicago

THE AESTHETIC THEORIES OF THE GERMAN STORM AND STRESS MOVEMENT

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND LITERATURE
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

BY

ARTHUR WALD

Private Edition, Distributed By
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. STORM AND STRESS

The characteristic expression which rationalistic philosophy found in the German *Aufklärung* presents a striking and significant contrast to the form assumed by the Enlightenment in France and England. France, producing as it did the most typical representatives of the movement, succeeded by repressive measures in preventing it from bearing full fruit until it culminated in the violent extremes of the Revolution. The practical genius of the English people and the peculiar social and political conditions on the island provided for English Enlightenment a more favorable soil. The efforts of its protagonists to realize their ideal of government were successful. Far from persecuting those who accepted the new moral, religious, and political views, the English offered an asylum to refugees from less generous France. In science, the theories of Bacon were boldly put into practice by Newton and Harvey. Nowhere did the English thinkers need to fear the consequences of sweeping away old traditions and beliefs, and the opportunity afforded them to correct theory by experience kept them from the passionate outbursts to which mere speculation always leads under repression or restraint. Added to this there came very soon in England the wholesome reaction of empiricism in Locke and his successors, who instituted an inquiry into the origin of knowledge and true to English tradition as represented in Bacon, found its source in experience.

In Germany the entire situation was strikingly different.¹ With social and political conditions far less favorable, the champions of Enlightenment had no public, as in England, prepared for the reception of the new ideas, but found themselves separated by a great gulf from the mass of the people. In their struggle to overcome the tremendous inertia of the existent and traditional, they could depend only on themselves. Thwarted in their efforts to realize their ideals in society and government, they went off into the realm of the supersensuous and the ideal. In this situation lies the explanation of the feverish violence and impetuosity of the German *Aufklärer*; their eagerness to reject everything existent and make a clear field; their occasional

¹ Biedermann, *Deutschland im 18. Jhrh.* II, 380-83.

hesitation and doubt whether to advance or yield. Thus also is to be explained on the one hand their pettiness in the consideration of the affairs of everyday life and on the other their highflown speculation in the field of metaphysics; their youthful self-assurance and naïve pride of intellectual superiority, as well as their lamentable lack of practical sense and energy.

It is true that tendencies proceeding from Lockian philosophy mingle in the German *Aufklärung* with afterworkings of Cartesian-Leibnitzian rationalism. Leibnitz and his disciple, Wolff, had given grudging acquiescence to the place of empirical knowledge, which, however, they regarded as a more or less confused idea of things as compared with intellectual knowledge as clear and direct insight. The popular philosophy of Mendelssohn, Abbt, and Garve had adopted the empirical principle. But new abstractions soon took the place of the old. As for the great mass of mediocre writers and thinkers who represent the movement in Germany, the Wagner of Goethe's *Faust* is a fair type. One needs only to read a few of the reviews in the *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen* to realize the complacent self-satisfaction, the dreary pedantry, the naïve love of system that characterized the general run of contemporary German writers and thinkers.

The inevitable tendency of rationalism toward over-confidence in the rational faculty of man as the only criterion for determining truth, toward a disregard for all feelings and aspirations that could not meet its narrow tests, and contempt for all other aspects of the human spirit; toward a denial of all individuality in the attempted imposition of supposedly universal rules in life and art—all this was seen at its worst in Germany. A reaction was inevitable. Even at the beginning of the century the vagabond poet, Günther, had poured forth his love and sorrow in verse unmindful of rule or model. Gottsched's pseudo-classic program was opposed by Bodmer and Breitinger with their insistence on the rights of the imagination in poetic composition. Klopstock's *Messias* with its depth of feeling and disregard of classic form created a furore among the younger generation. Quixotic Hamann, "*der Magus des Nordens*" with his watchwords caprice, originality, genius, boldly gave the call to arms against the stronghold of rationalism. Finally young Herder, summing up in his versatile genius the tendencies of a whole generation and standing forth as the prophet of a new era, found a group of young enthusiasts ready not only to respond to his leadership but to go far beyond him in the development of his fruitful ideas.

Storm and Stress is but the culmination of a revolt which had been gathering strength for half a century—a revolt against the intellectual philistinism of the *Aufklärung*. The Enlightenment itself was originally an assertion of intellectual independence, a protest against medievalism. But when reason itself usurped all authority and presumed to impose its supposedly universal laws and precepts in all departments of human life, the time was ripe for a new assertion of individualism.

This individualistic tendency is the most essential manifestation of Storm and Stress. The original, the eccentric, the characteristic, becomes its ideal, the goal of all endeavor. The personification of this individualism is the *Kraftgenie, der ganze Kerl*, of which Prometheus, Faust, Götz, Karl Moor, are varying expressions. Man as man, defying all convention, disregarding all man-made laws, subject to no authority from without, living his life fully, fearlessly unto himself alone—this is the ideal which the *Stürmer* represented in their writings and strove to realize in themselves. Thus Faust, impatient with the narrow confines of existence, would boldly cross the threshold of the unseen world to discover its secrets. A passage from Maler Müller may be quoted as typical:

Faust war immer einer meiner Lieblingshelden, weil ich ihn gleich für einen grossen Menschen nahm; einen Menschen der alle seine Kraft gefühlt, gefühlt den Zügel, den Glück und Schicksal ihm anhielt, den er gern zerbrechen wollt' und Mittel und Wege sucht; der Mut genug hat, alles niederzuwerfen was ihm in den Weg tritt und ihn verhindern will; Wärme genug in seinem Busen trägt, sich in Liebe an einen Teufel zu hängen, der ihm offen und vertraulich entgegentritt. Das Emporschwingen, so hoch als möglich, ganz zu sein, was man fühlt dass man sein könnte—es liegt doch so ganz in der Natur! . . . Was wunder denn, wenn der starke kräftige Mensch sein Recht nimmt und wenn auch sein Mut ihn über die Welt hinaus-treibt, ein Wesen zu suchen, das ihm ganz genüge? Es gibt Momente im Leben—wer erfährt das nicht, hat's nicht schon tausendmal erfahren?—wo das Herz sich selbst überspringt, wo der herrlichste, beste Mensch, trotz Gerechtigkeit und Gesetzen, absolut über sich selbst hinaus begehrt.¹

Reason being denied its place of pre-eminence and all conventions and external rules of conduct rejected, the heart, the organ of feeling, the seat of the emotions and passions, became the highest law. "Der einzigen Stimme meines Herzens horche ich," we read in Fritz Jakobi's *Allwill*. "Diese zu vernehmen, zu unterscheiden, zu verstehen, heisst mir Weisheit, ihr muthig zu folgen, Tugend. Noch mit jedem Tage wird der Glaube an das Herz Mächtiger in mir." "So fühl ich denn

¹ Dichtungen von Maler Müller, Zuschrift.

in dem Augenblick was den Dichter macht," says Franz in *Götz von Berlichingen*, "ein volles, ganz von einer Empfindung volles Herz." "Gefühl ist alles," cries Faust in his impassioned apology to Gretchen. Werther, nursing his wounded heart like a sick child, is the type and personification of this sentimentalism, which, nourished especially by Klopstock, then later by the reading of Rousseau, Ossian, Richardson, and Sterne became a veritable fad in Germany.

Hand in hand with this individualistic tendency and this emphasis on the prerogatives of the emotional self went a new enthusiasm for nature in its broadest and most comprehensive sense. On the one hand there is evident an intense longing to realize the ideal of the natural man, a desire which found expression in bitter scorn for all convention and all accidents of birth and rank. On the other, the concept of external nature was remarkably deepened and vitalized. Not only a new appreciation of the beauties of nature apart from any thought of design, but an intense longing to know her in all her aspects is everywhere evident. In the lyric, the novel, and the drama nature is the inspiration and the reality and truth of nature the constant goal.

Thus Storm and Stress would oppose conscious self-assertion to timid self-limitation, originality and genius to imitative mediocrity, emotion to reason, action and experience to learning and speculation, nature and reality to artificiality and pretense—all in all a revolutionary protest against contemporary society, science, and art, in a word, against the philistinism of the German *Aufklärung*.

B. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THESIS

We have attempted briefly to characterize the Storm and Stress movement. Do such ideals as these premise any definite aesthetic attitude? To what extent, if at all, did these young writers try to make clear to themselves the nature and conditions of artistic production? What positive ideas did they have about the great fundamental questions of art? To answer these questions shall be the purpose of this thesis.

In the present study, however, it will be expedient to limit ourselves to the main conceptions common to the principal exponents of the movement and, in general, not to concern ourselves with fields of thought in individual writers which, though interesting and important in themselves, are not directly related to the general tendencies of the new school. We shall neither attempt to study the application of aesthetic theory in the practice of the *Genies* nor to deduce aesthetic principles from their writings. We shall simply endeavor to organize and study as a whole

their utterances, often casual and seldom deliberately systematic, on questions lying within the field of art.

Even a cursory study will soon make it clear that a considerable number of the exponents of the movement thought very little or not at all in aesthetic terms. One examines in vain the youthful writings of Maximilian Klinger for any definite statement of aesthetic theory. With the exception of sparse remarks in letters, it was not until 1785, five years after his definite separation from the *Genies* that he gave, in retrospect, a somewhat apologetic defense of the dramatic principle followed in his earlier dramas. Friedrich (Maler) Müller and Heinrich Leopold Wagner offer but scanty material for our purpose. Friedrich Heinrich Jakobi and Johann Kaspar Lavater were primarily concerned with the religious phase of the movement. Daniel Fr. Schubart, than whom no one was more deeply imbued with the revolutionary ideas of the new school, rarely justified his unsparing condemnation or exuberant praise of contemporary literary productions by any statement of aesthetic principle, his critical viewpoint being chiefly determined by moral and patriotic considerations.

On the other hand J. G. Hamann, whose powerful impulse to the movement is recognized in the phrase "Vater des Sturmes und Dranges," offers in his works much that merits consideration. The early writings of Herder, whose prolific thought was divided between contemporary rationalistic philosophy and the new individualism, and who cannot, strictly speaking, be counted a member of the school, exerted such a decided influence on its thought, especially on that of young Goethe, that they deserve a prominent place in our study. Although the *Journal meiner Reise im Jahre 1768-69* and the writings of the next five years give more full expression to the spirit of Storm and Stress, the earlier works, especially the *Fragment* of 1768-69 and the *Kritische Wälder*, notwithstanding the contempt expressed for them later in the *Journal*, are essential for an understanding of Goethe and his group. *Ursprung der Sprache*, *Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker*, and *Shakespeare* represent the best thought of Herder during these early years of his authorship. *Über Erkennen und Empfinden*, which appeared in 1778, began to take definite form much earlier and is of interest as reflecting important phases of the young writer's thought. The *Plastik*, published in the same year, and thus after his definite break with the *Genies*, was written before that time and also falls within the scope of our study.

Young Goethe, to whom as the acknowledged leader of the school and its most typical representative must be given the central place in any study of Storm and Stress, thought much about questions of art, as various of his writings of the period attest. *Von Deutscher Baukunst*, *Shakespeare*, and *Nach Falkonet und über Falkonet*, together with the reviews published in the *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen* are our most important sources here, although *Werther* and various letters and poems are significant. Only the writings of the years between Goethe's return from Leipzig to Frankfurt and the removal to Weimar will be considered.

Aside from his *Anmerkungen übers Theater*, in which Lenz gave the new school its most complete statement of dramatic theory, he has only scattered passages bearing on aesthetics. The importance of his *Anmerkungen* for our purpose may be inferred from Goethe's statement in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*¹ that from this essay one might get a fair idea of the discussions indulged in by the Strassburg circle of *Stürmer*.

The reviews and essays of J. H. Merck, recognized even in those early years of his intimate association with Goethe as a keen critic and connoisseur of art, contain not a little of aesthetic theory. His contributions to the *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen* of the year 1772 and an important review of *Werther* in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* are characterized by more restraint and maturity of thought than was ordinarily displayed by his associates. The later numerous contributions on questions of art to Wieland's *Merkur*² indicate no marked change in aesthetic viewpoint and will therefore not be drawn upon in our study.

Wilhelm Heinse, whose first literary efforts were strongly influenced by Wieland and Gleim, offers nothing of consequence until 1774 and the years immediately following, when, quickened to more original production by his acquaintance with Goethe, for whom he conceived an unbounded admiration, and by the study of the art treasures of the Düsseldorf gallery, he contributes in the so-called *Gemälde-Briefe* aesthetic discussions altogether in the spirit of Storm and Stress. Written in a style unsurpassed for clearness and grace in contemporary prose though with little effort at complete and systematic presentation, these letters give a most satisfying idea of the aesthetic reaction of one of the most

¹ Goethe's *Werke* in *Meyers Klassikerausgaben*, XIII, 54.

² Of especial importance are *Über die Schönheit*, 1776; *Über die Landschaftsmalerei*, 1777; *Über den Mangel des epischen Geistes in unserm lieben Vaterlande*, 1778; *Briefe über Mahler und Malerei an eine Dame*, 1779; *Über den engherzigen Geist der Deutschen im letzten Jahrzehnd*, 1779; *Ein Gespräch zwischen Autor und Leser*, 1780; *Einige Rettungen Albrecht Dürers gegen die Sage der Kunstliteratur*, 1780; *Über die letzte Gemäldeausstellung in . . .*, 1781.

typical of the *Genies*. The letter of August, 1776, with its appreciations of various paintings, prefaced by a rather lengthy discussion of beauty, and those of May and July, 1777, on Rubens, considered by Heinse himself his best, together with the letter on the Italian poem *Ricciardetto*, are most deserving of study. Heinse's sojourn in Italy (1781-83) did not bring about any real change in his aesthetic convictions, as a similar experience later did for Goethe, and the works of these years and of the following period will be given due consideration.¹

Friedrich Schiller, belated apostle of Storm and Stress, living in his most impressionable period in a thought world largely different from that of Goethe and his group and without direct contact with them, has little of importance for a comparative study of this kind. We shall include only those essays written during the first years after his début with the *Räuber*.² The *Philosophische Briefe*, in which the gradual shifting from his earlier aesthetic attitude is clearly apparent, and the more pretentious essays inspired by the study of Kant obviously belong to a new period in his development.

Klopstock's *Gelehrtenrepublik*, written and published in 1772, which called forth the enthusiastic approval of young Goethe, is also a document whose importance is not to be disregarded.

¹ Sulzer-Gebing is quoted by Jessen (p. 101) as saying that in Italy Heinse, unlike Klinger and Goethe, only developed more fully, instead of overcoming, his Storm and Stress tendencies. Utitz and Jolivet agree that Heinse's attitude remains fundamentally the same, while Jessen thinks his aesthetic point of view suffered a fundamental change during the sojourn in Italy.

² The *Vorreden* and *Selbstkritik*, *Über das gegenwärtige Deutsche Theater, Die Schaubühne als moralische Anstalt betrachtet, Briefe eines reisenden Dänen*.

CHAPTER II

THE AESTHETICS OF STORM AND STRESS

A. THE PRINCIPLE OF EXPERIENCE

I. THE EMPIRICAL BASIS OF STORM AND STRESS THOUGHT

The popular rationalistic philosophy of the day found a favorite field of speculation in the more abstract problems of aesthetics, which it delighted in reducing, like other branches of knowledge, to a finished and perfect system. A flood of literature bearing on such questions had made its appearance. Leibnitz and Wolff had dealt with them. Baumgarten had published his important work *Aesthetica*. But beside these thinkers of the first order numerous second-rate philosophers had taken up the discussion, most prominent among them Sulzer, who with his pretentious *Wörterbuch der schönen Künste* best represents contemporary thought on these questions. In addition there was the herd of mediocre systematizers and commentators who industriously kept brewing their *Ragout von anderer Schmaus*, of which Riedel's work, so mercilessly satirized by Herder in his fourth *Wäldchen*, is a fair sample.

The attitude of Storm and Stress toward this contemporary aesthetic speculation is no uncertain one. Such expressions as the following are of frequent occurrence in their writings: "Hypothesen u. Formeln der Kalender-, System-u. Projektmacher" (Hamann); "leere Speculation, Vernunftgewäsche, psychologischer Unsinn, ästhetische Schwätzer, Kennerei, Trödelkram, Kunstgewäsche, spekulative Stubenarbeit" (Herder); "Theoreyklauber" (Klopstock); "Schlamm der Theorien u. Litteraturen, Wortgeprahl über bildende Kunst, mordlügnerische Philosophie" (Goethe); "das Geklimper von Kunstwörtern, Seuche von Kunsttheoristen" (Merck); "Scholiasten" (Heinse); "ekle Aesthetikern, lieblichplaudernde Aesthetiken, Politiken u. Kritiken" (Shubart). Herder, while pitilessly flaying Riedel and his ilk, spoke with some consideration and respect, although with frank criticism, of Sulzer and read with admiration the greater philosophers of his own and foreign countries. Those of the younger group made no distinction and vied with each other in their expression of disgust and contempt for all abstract speculation. The extreme of this attitude is perhaps best represented by the words of Franz in Klinger's *Leidendes Weib*.¹

¹ Act 2, scene 3.

Franz: (Zimmer, antike Köpfe und Zeichnungen, einige Bücher vor ihm liegend.) Weg, Quark, alles. Der nächste Weg zum Narren zu werden ist, sich ein System bauen zu wollen. Hab's lange gedacht. Da arbeitet man sich durchs Zeugs bis mein einen auf den Punkt hat, woraus er das Ding ansieht, das er Weisheit und Wahrheit nennt, glaubt man's ertappt zu haben. Vom Thron der Weisheit strahlt herab—Was? Weisheit?—Seifenblase, Schaum! Vom Thron der Wahrheit—o, ihr hungrigen Poeten, die ihr sie alle mit hellen Farben gemalt, mit dem hellen Glanz der Sonne vergoldet und verglichen! . . . Lieber Gott, da wird kein Bisschen genutzt. Meinetwegen ich will kein Buch mehr ansehen. . . . Lasst mir meinen Shakespeare und meinen Homer. Wir bleiben zusammen bis in den Tod. (Stellt sich vor einen Kopf des Laokoon und darauf vors Brustbild der Venus.) Mein Laokoon, wie hast auch du schon leiden müssen. Jeder Bube schwatzt von dir und grosse Leute reden, warum du den Mund aufst. Hätten sie vor dir gestanden mit dem innigsten Gefühl! . . . Venus! Ausdruck der Gottheit, Leben, Weben, Alles,—es ist ein Augenblick, nur ein Augenblick—da steh ich oben.

Läufer: Guten Tag, Franz. Stehst du wieder vor deinem Götzen.

Franz: Sie sind's nun, meine Götter und Götzen. Bitte dich, lass das Maul heraus. Sieh du musst davon nicht reden.

The explanation of such an attitude on the part of the new school is not far to seek. This literature of abstract generalizations is a product of the rationalistic confidence in reason alone as the all-sufficient guide to truth. Storm and Stress in its protest against the dominance of reason in every sphere insists on concrete experience as the only sure basis of theory, as the only true source of knowledge and of art. The important part played in their thought by the principle of experience makes it worthy of careful consideration at the outset. We shall see how constantly the writers of Storm and Stress insist in various connections and from various angles upon this principle.

Young Herder, in this respect altogether at one with Storm and Stress, had been an eager listener in the lecture-room of Kant at Königsberg. The great fundamental questions of philosophy appealed tremendously to him and his early works show an astonishing familiarity not only with the literature of his own land, but with that of England and France as well. Reading with a discrimination remarkable for his years and recognizing their limitations, he was a warm admirer of the great pioneers of German aesthetic thought. He even speaks (4. W.) with qualified appreciation of Sulzer, whose dictionary, not yet published, he hopes to find based on the data of observation and experience. But for the aesthetic efforts of Riedel, Klotz, and their ilk, he has nothing but the

deepest contempt. Upon the work of Riedel, which furnished the direct occasion for his fourth *Wäldchen*, he fairly heaps terms of ridicule: It is "ein verworrener Schattenriss von Bücher- und Letternideen," "unter allen bisherigen Theorien die elendeste, die verderblichste," and the author is merely an "Auschreiber allgemeiner Begriffe," never going back to the actual facts of experience, displaying no knowledge or sense of the beautiful. And from this starting point Herder launches out in a merciless attack upon the great swarm of shallow eclectic philosophers of whose products Riedel's work is a fair sample—conglomerations of borrowed ideas superficially understood, commentaries and would-be systems without end.

In striking contrast Herder now sets forth his own ideal of what aesthetics should be. Scientific aesthetics, or the science of beauty, as distinguished from natural aesthetics, or the art of taste, whose purpose is to develop appreciation of art and give practical guidance to the artist, has scientific knowledge for its sole aim. This knowledge can be acquired only by actual observation. Riedel had started from such abstract conceptions as beauty, truth, and sublimity, giving conclusions without premises, principles without bases, words without substance. Nowhere has he appealed to first-hand information or based his theory on the data of experience. This Herder proposes to do. Instead of burdening the reader with mere abstractions, experience is to be his watchword. He will first get hold of the object, the fact, and then find its appropriate expression. He will trace each of these abstract conceptions to its origin and determine its real meaning. Beauty is a slowly acquired concept, it can only be abstracted from numerous given data. These data must be carefully assembled and organized in order to make possible an analysis of the concept. Herder's method is here throughout insistently empirical. Continually he appeals to the data and phenomena of experience. "Ich kann keine Regeln geben," he says, "ich gebe nur die Geschichte einzelner Erfahrungen." "Lasst uns die Natur und die Erfahrung fragen"—this is his guiding principle.

Still more emphatic is the appeal to experience in Herder's *Journal meiner Reise im Jahr 1769*, a true document of Storm and Stress in its dissatisfaction with the fettering confines of his former life, its profound contempt for vain speculation and the mere learning of books and its impetuous longing for action in the great life of the world. Here he has only scorn for the writings of the years just past. "Todte Untersuchungen" they seem to him now, "Kritische unnütze, grobe Wälder,"

in which he has spent his youthful ardor, his passion and genius in vain. Professedly empirical in method, they were based upon what he himself had not seen or experienced and therefore could not really understand. He had insisted on the facts of experience as a basis for his scientific aesthetics. Now there seem to him to be no other facts worth considering but those he himself has lived. "Jedes Datum ist Handlung, alles Andere ist Schatten, ist Raisonnement." In this mood all the literary efforts produced in the seclusion of his study seem to him vain and valueless and he himself but a "Tintenfass gelehrter Schriftstellerei," a "Wörterbuch von Künsten und Wissenschaften" a "Repositorium voll Papiere und Bücher." He wishes he might destroy all he has learned at second hand and acquire a new store of knowledge from first-hand sources. Why had he not learned to philosophize from nature itself, without books and instruments, on the basis of the facts and realities of actual observation? What an opportunity this voyage offered! What living commentaries to the classic poets were suggested by the primitive life on shipboard, what data for explanation of ancient mythology there might be in the skippers' tales! What material for the realization of his dream of a "Universalgeschichte der Bildung der Menschheit" in the study of climatic conditions and philology! Inspired by this desire to accomplish something positive and tangible, Herder outlines a magnificent educational project which he hopes to realize on his return to Riga. All education, he maintains, should begin not with abstract ideas but with first-hand information secured from observation and experimentation. Empirical study of the natural sciences should come first. Then would follow history, taught not as a dry system, but as a manifestation of the human mind. Last in order would be taught abstract metaphysical subjects, but on the basis of the experimental sciences and therefore not as mere speculation.

It is true that Herder's speculative bent of mind and his imaginative temperament often led him afield and caused him to construct elaborate theories on scanty and insufficient data. But in purpose he remains throughout true to the principle of experience. If in his admiration of the best in rationalistic philosophy he leaned to the older generation, if he was not entirely free himself from the "Erbfehler der Deutschen, Systeme zu zimmern" yet his purpose was always to resist the deplored tendency of his countrymen to make elaborate deductions from mere words. In this regard especially he is the precursor of Storm and Stress.¹

¹ Weissenfels, *Goethe im Sturm u. Drang*, p. 146.

Even before coming to Strassburg young Goethe had written in one of his Frankfurt letters: "Ich halte die Erfahrung für die einzige wahre Wissenschaft." In Strassburg he was soon on intimate terms with Salzmann and his group, most of them students of medicine, and the study of anatomy to which he was attracted by his association with them awakened his admiration for the "schöne hippocratische Verfahrungsart, wodurch sich ohne Theorie, aus einer eignen Erfahrung die Gestalten des Wissens heraufgaben."¹ For every kind of inquiry he now demands such a method. Of these same friends Goethe relates² that they were heartily tired of all philosophy, especially metaphysics, and so threw themselves with all the greater passion and energy into the acquiring of living knowledge and experience. "General observations make no one a wiser man," he says elsewhere. This tendency, already marked, was strengthened by the intercourse with Herder, who at the time of his visit to Strassburg was occupied with the further development of the ideas of his fourth *Wäldchen*, which we have just considered, and of his essay on *Ursprung der Sprache*, in which also he was proceeding according to an empirical method. Goethe is but following Herder when he insists that all criticism should be based on actual knowledge of the milieu of the writer. In his reviews written for the *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen* the same demand is made for the experimental basis in opposition to generalizations and traditional prejudice. In order rightly to appreciate Homer it is necessary to know his times and surroundings as did Wood.³ The writer of a *Charakteristik verschiedener europäischer Nationen* is ridiculed for basing his work on mere hearsay and superficial observation instead of on actual contact with the common people.⁴

In an enthusiastic letter written after the first reading of the *Gelehrtenrepublik*, Goethe says of this book: "Klopstocks herrliches Werk hat mir neues Leben in die Adern gegossen. Die einzige Poetik aller Zeiten und Völker, die einzigen Regeln die möglich sind! . . . Das alles aus dem tiefsten Herzen, aus eigenster Erfahrung mit einer bezaubernden Simplizität hingeschrieben!" Goethe's warm reception of this work indicates the high regard in which the aged author was held by the new generation. And nowhere is the empirical viewpoint given more definite expression than in the lines *Vorschlag zur Güte*.⁵

Nun endlich sind wir doch dahin gekommen!
Erfahrung hat den Platz der ihr gebürt, genommen!

¹ D. & W., III, 43.

³ *Ibid.*, II, 492.

² D. j. G., I, 239.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 462.

⁵ *Gelehrtenrepublik*, p. 202.

Sie ist's in der Philosophie;
 Sie ist és in der Theorie
 Des Dichters, und auch da nur sie!
 Erst hatte sie der Dichter, sprach
 Ihr Donnern und ihr Säuseln nach.
 Erfahr du sie, wie er. Wenn dieser Tag dir tagte;
 Dann frag ihn erst: Ob er sie recht erfuhr? recht sagte?
 Denn was dein Saz auch immer seze,
 Vom folgereichsten Allgemeinen
 Bis zu dem Einzelsten des engbegrenzten Feinen,
 Ist alles ohne sie Geschwäze.

In the same work, carrying out this idea, Klopstock demands that the grammarian base his theory on the language as it is and not as he thinks it ought to be. Actual usage must be his guide. It may seem to him an arbitrary tyrant but unless he abides by it he is a grammatical prattler and not a grammarian.¹

The *Vorschlag zu einer Poetik, deren Regeln sich auf die Erfahrung gründen*² is in the same spirit. We can never, says the author, learn so to know the nature of the human mind as to be able with absolute certainty to say a priori that this or that poem will produce such and such an effect. For this reason most theories of poetic art are such a conglomeration of unproved, half-true, half-false rules. Now, then, what must the theorist do who would produce the kind of poetics Klopstock desires? He must do two things: first, observe his own reaction and that of others to various kinds of poems; that is, he must himself make experiments and study the experiences of others; second, carefully distinguish between the qualities of the various poems or analyze what in the various genres has produced a certain effect. Such experiments have been made with the writings of the ancients for centuries. In this investigation one would have to distinguish definitely between what is the actual experience of those who write upon these works and what is mere repetition of what others have said. The passages in the poets which seem to be warm with the touch of nature one would try to experience in nature one's self and thus verify them.

In his review of Sulzer's Dictionary³ Merck is in perfect accord with Goethe.⁴ The author has, as it were, made a journey into the land of art but he was not born and bred in that land, he has never

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

² *Ibid.*, p. 323.

³ Attributed by Bernays to Goethe and included in D. J. G., II, 405.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 470.

lived and suffered and enjoyed there. Nowhere has he made experiments but only observations. The reviewer suggests that the lengthy psychological explanations of abstract rules that make up two-thirds of the book would be improved by a touch of Baconian iconoclasm. Instead of gathering together a number of notes on the various arts, it would have been more profitable to continue the work of Lessing and Herder, especially in distinguishing between the fundamental principles of sculpture and painting—a task to be undertaken, however, only on the basis of an empirical psychology. The shallow verbose *Gemäldeausstellungensräsonnements* pouring forth from Paris and other cities, for which Merck expresses his profound disgust in an article in *Merkur*,¹ never come from artists but from mere inexperienced theorists—"Mieth- u. Fremdlinge" in the field of art. Practice originally came before theory, the artist searched and found, and told as best he could of his experience. These casual utterances of the artist's emotion were crystallized into dogma, people without talent or taste for art arbitrarily patched together their abstractions, and behold the theory of today. Laymen, Merck approvingly quotes Falkonet as saying, should be silent and not offer explanations. And the artist Mengs, appearing as the mediator in an imaginary dispute between Burke and Hogarth, is made to represent a like attitude: "Let the so-called connoisseur refrain from passing judgment on our mistakes or on our wise purposes in our creative work. Only in as far as he strives after us, himself puts his hand to the work and makes attempts can he judge our efforts." Honest old Dürer wisely said: "Hüt sich ein yedlicher von denen zu lernen die da wol von der Sach reden, und darneben mit ihren Händen alweyl streffliche untüchtig Werk gemacht haben. Dann nyemandt versteht vollkommlicher ein Werk zu urtheilen, dann ein verständiger Künstler der da solche durch sein Werk offt bewiessen hat."

In connection with a comparison of classic and modern drama in the spirit of Herder, Lenz says: "Die Erfahrung ist die ewige Atmosphäre des strengen Philosophen, sein Raisonement kann und darf sich keinen Nagel breit drüber erheben, so wenig als eine Bombe aus ihrem berechneten Kreise fliegen kann."² His *Soldaten* he calls "ein Gemälde aus meinem Leben heraus gehoben"—"Dazu gehört viel Zeit," he adds, "die Stände so darzustellen wie sie sind."

Heinse, while echoing the influence of Leibnitz and Baumgarten in his aesthetic ideas, is essentially and emphatically empirical in his discussions of questions of art and not at all a "Systematiker." His

¹ Stahr, p. 345.

² Lenz, *Schriften*, II, 211.

Gemäldebriefe are the result of long-continued intensive study of the paintings of the Düsseldorf gallery.¹ In Rome, as his writings of the period abundantly attest, he remains a thorough and convinced empiricist. He asks in Ardinghello:

Wer über ein Kunstwerk am richtigsten urtheilen kann? Ich glaube, wer die Natur am besten kennt, die vorgestellt ist, und die Schranken der Kunst weiss . . . Selbst der grösste Maler, der immer auf festem Lande lebte, kann über kein Seestück urtheilen; und der erste beste Sultan, der liebt und noch Kraft in den Adern hat, darf eher sprechen aus seinem Serail über eine nackte Venus von unsern Alten, als der fromme Fra Bartolommeo.²

Though evidently influenced by the ideas of Winckelmann regarding Greek art, he has no sympathy with the tendency to emphasize the imitation of ancient models. To study and imitate the Greeks he considers utter absurdity, for the nature they copied is about us still, and nature is our norm.³

In this opposition to systematic theory and all abstract speculation, this continued insistence on the principle of experience, the influence of English empiricism whether direct or indirect, whether conscious or unconscious, is unquestionable. To be sure, the deep-seated aversion of the new school for all systematic theorizing would lead us to assume, except in the case of Herder, little direct acquaintance even with those philosophers who professed to reject mere abstract speculation and to base their thinking solely on concrete experience. But so widely read and commented were English thinkers in Germany at this time that even the most general reader could not escape contact with their ideas. Herder with his amazing familiarity with the whole field of philosophic literature and his own insistent empiricism served as a purveyor of the principle in its most fruitful applications.

It was in Francis Bacon that the empirical attitude of mind, so peculiar to the English renaissance and so characteristic throughout of English philosophic thought, first found full individual expression. The greatest and most influential representative of the empirical tendency, however, is John Locke. Denying *in toto* the Cartesian doctrine of innate ideas, he maintains that experience is the only true source of knowledge. "Our observation employed either about external sensible objects or about the internal operation of our minds, perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that which supplies our understanding with

¹ *Werke*, IX, 374.

² *Ibid.*, IV, 8.

³ Jessen, p. 210.

all the materials of thinking.”¹ Consequently we can know nothing whatever outside of what experience, be it internal or external, furnishes us. The mind is like a sheet of white paper upon which are written the sensuous impressions of the external world. These impressions are then further reshaped by the reason into the more complex and abstract ideas of the thinking process. While it may be said that Locke with his theory of the dual source of our knowledge in sensation and reflection, i.e., outer and inner experience, and the important place assigned to the “operation of the mind” or reason, does not represent true empiricism in the logical consequence to which it was carried by his French disciple Condillac, yet it was from the impetus he gave to philosophic thought that the empirical school took its rise. We should be led too far afield by a consideration of the further development of empirical philosophy and the application of the principle of experience to aesthetics by Addison, Shaftesbury, and later with more success by Burke, Gerard, and Hume.

Notwithstanding the disdain of young Goethe and his Strassburg friends for the atheistic materialism of D’Holbach’s *Système de la Nature*, its insistent devotion to the empirical principle and detestation of mere abstraction could not but strengthen a tendency toward which they felt themselves so strongly impelled. “Man would be a metaphysician before he has become a practical philosopher. He quits the contemplation of realities to meditate on chimeras. He neglects experience to feed on conjecture, to indulge in hypotheses. He dares not cultivate his reason, because from the earliest days he has been taught to consider it criminal. . . . It is time these remedies were sought; it is time to look the evil boldly in the face, to examine its foundations, to scrutinize its superstructure; reason, with its faithful guide, experience, must attack in their entrenchments those prejudices of which the human race has but too long been the victim. For this purpose, reason must be restored to its proper rank—it must be rescued from the evil company with which it is associated.” Such passages, while they explain the aversion of the Strassburg circle for the work, could not but tend to strengthen their confidence in the empirical attitude toward life to which they had committed themselves.

The most direct source of inspiration, however, was doubtless the realistic novels of Fielding, for whom the young Genies professed unbounded admiration and who was generally regarded in Germany as the opponent of Richardson’s sentimentality and the representative of naturalness and common sense.

¹ Locke’s *Essays*, Book II, chap. i, sec. 2.

In the introductory chapters to each book of *Tom Jones*, Fielding undertakes to justify his procedure in the composition of the novel. After first paying his respects to Genius, Humanity, and Learning, he says: "Lastly comes experience, long conversant with the wise, the good, the learned and the polite. Nor with them only, but with every kind of character, from the minister at his levee, to the bailiff in his spunging-house; from the duchess at her drum to the landlady behind her bar. From this only can the manners of mankind be known; to which the recluse pedant, however great his parts or extensive his learning may be, hath ever been a stranger.

"Again there is another sort of knowledge, beyond the power of learning to bestow, and this is to be had by *conversation*—so necessary is this to understanding the characters of men, that none are more ignorant of them than those learned pedants whose lives have been entirely consumed in colleges and among books; for however exquisitely human nature may have been described by writers, the true practical system can be learned only in the world. Indeed the like happens in every other kind of knowledge. Neither physics nor law are to be practically known from books. Nay, the farmer, the planter, the gardener, must perfect by experience what he hath acquired of the rudiments by reading."¹

We have seen how the new school expressed its abhorrence of the popular aesthetics of the day. It does not follow, however, that they themselves disdained to think on questions of art. They had well-defined and enthusiastic convictions to which they gave emphatic expression in their writings. But they built up no system and their statements of aesthetic theory, except in the case of young Herder and to a certain degree of Heinse, are largely incidental, given expression in purely literary works, in reviews, letters, and appreciations of art. And as we have attempted to show in the present chapter, they refuse to consider any philosophy of value except as it is an outgrowth of life. Practice, they insist, must precede theory, aesthetic creed must spring from individual experience.

2. THE ORGANS OF EXPERIENCE. SENSUALISM OF STORM AND STRESS

We have pointed to the emphasis placed upon inner and outer experience in the empirical philosophy of John Locke. Notwithstanding the important place given to the "operation of the mind" in his system, Locke's empiricism was, in its main emphasis, essentially a reaction from

¹ Book IX, chap. i.

Cartesian rationalism with its confidence in the infallibility of pure reason, and it was precisely in this opposition that the principle of experience was seized upon and capitalized by Storm and Stress.

Now the logical consequence of the empirical viewpoint in philosophy is the sensationalism of which Locke's French disciple Condillac is the chief representative, and the position taken by the latter, when carried to its extreme conclusion, was quite consistent with the rationalistic materialism of D'Holbach, which contemptuously and absolutely denied the rights of the emotional self to consideration. But such a philosophy, applying mechanical laws to human values and regarding men, like other formations, as but functions of matter, could make no appeal to the profound idealism and impatient imagination of the *Genies*. Against this total disregard of the emotional faculties, voices had already been raised in protest, at first timidly and apologetically, then with more boldness and insistence, until with Rousseau feeling was placed at the very center of human life. The supposedly unerring processes of reason had been held the only sure way to truth while the emotional faculties were regarded as variable and deceitful. Now it is the rational faculty that comes under suspicion as capricious and untrustworthy. Its abstractions are denied their validity and feeling is given the place of pre-eminence.

Thus while in the *Système de la Nature* there is a constant correlation of reason, nature, and experience, in the writings of Storm and Stress—the contrast with D'Holbach's trinity is striking and significant—there is an insistently recurring association of feeling with experience and nature, the latter term being used, to be sure, with a new vitality and depth of content. And, indeed, there is no inconsistency in this parallel emphasis on feeling and experience. Though not expressed in philosophic terms, we have here a correspondence to the inner and outer experience of Locke. As in the latter's system the mind in reflection operates with the data provided by the senses, there is a somewhat analogous dual relation between the inner life and the external experience of the poet or artist. "Sieh lieber," Goethe writes to Fritz Jacobi, "was doch alles Schreibens Anfang und Ende ist, die Reproduktion der Welt um mich, durch die innere Welt, die alles packt, verbindet, neuschafft, knetet und in eigener Manier wieder hinstellt."¹ And to Herder he writes about his study of the life of Socrates for a projected drama: "Ich brauche Zeit, das zum Gefühl zu entwickeln."² "Noch einige Plane zu grossen Dramas habe ich erfunden," he confides to a friend, "das heisst, das interessante Detail dazu in der Natur gefunden und in meinem Herzen."³

¹ D. J. G., III, 32.

² *Ibid.*, II, 303.

³ *Ibid.*, III, 22.

Nothing could be farther from Storm and Stress than the conception of poetic composition as a mere intellectual process of selecting and grouping certain given facts of observation. Experience and observation are essential, to be sure, but without value except as they become real to the poet and artist through the medium of his own emotion. Thus in the aesthetics of Storm and Stress, as in empirical philosophy, inner and outer experience are equally necessary and valid and such justification of the emotions is quite in harmony with the emphasis on experience.

It is therefore to be taken only as a logical corollary of the empirical principle which we have seen to be so fundamental in the thought of the *Genies* and of the individualistic ideal of "*der ganze Mensch*," demanding unrestrained expression of his entire being, when we find on their part such a frank and constant justification of the physical senses as the organs of experience. From Hamann, the first outspoken protagonist of the new ideas, to Heinse, who developed their aesthetic consequences most fully, this affirmation of the sensuous life finds varied and emphatic expression.

"Die Natur wirkt durch Sinne und Leidenschaften," wrote Hamann. "Wenn die Leidenschaften Glieder der Unehre sind, hören sie darum auf Waffen der Mannheit zu sein? Die Empfängnis neuer Ideen. . . . Entwürfe, die Arbeit und Ruhe des Weisen liegen im Schosse der Leidenschaften begraben. . . ." "Brauche deine Lenden . . . wie du deine Gliedmassen brauchst! Ein Herz ohne Leidenschaften ist wie ein Kopf ohne Begriffe."

Thus Herder, too, would have human nature in all its manifestations given recognition. In his *Journal* he gives voice to a longing away from books and learning to a life of action and sensuous enjoyment. In his fourth *Waldchen* he demands a psychology of the senses as a basis for aesthetics. Abstractions must give place to empirical investigation, concepts must be traced to their origin and their gradual development observed in order to ascertain their real nature in all their complexity.

There are three main senses that aesthetics must consider: touch, sight, and hearing. The sense of touch is the surest and truest sense and the first to be developed. It exists in the embryo at its first movement and out of it the other senses are gradually developed (*losgewunden*). Beauty of form primarily makes its appeal to touch and not to sight (is a *fühlbarer*, not a *sichtbarer Begriff*), and the origin of the concept must therefore be sought in the sense of touch. All expressions denoting beauty are derived from the latter sense. Only by touch can we perceive form while the eye can really perceive nothing but surface. To get the

impression of form the eye must, as it were, put itself in the place of the sense of touch. It becomes a kind of *verkürztes Gefühl*. Hearing is also explained physiologically as a form of the sense of touch.

If beauty, like other concepts, as Locke had taught, is conveyed to us through the senses, it follows that the various branches of art may be differentiated according to the particular sense which is the organ of each. Thus sculpture, Herder maintains in the fourth *Wäldchen*,¹ is not an art for the sense of sight, as had been supposed, but for that of touch. In looking at a work of sculpture, the eye, as it were, puts itself in the place of the sense of touch and one tries to see as if one were groping and feeling the object. The laws governing painting can, therefore, not be applied to sculpture, a distinction which Winckelmann and Lessing had both missed. Painting, on the other hand, is the art properly pertaining to the sense of sight, which can perceive only color and surface. To the sense of hearing, music bears a similar relation.

Herder's treatment of the arts in their relation to the senses is clearly a development of Baumgarten's famous definition. Complementing the system of his teacher Wolff, Baumgarten had developed what he called the science of sensuous perception, giving to it the name "Aesthetica" and had defined beauty as the perfection of sensuous knowledge. It is not necessary to enter here upon any detailed discussion of Baumgarten's system in relation to that of his predecessors Leibnitz and Wolff. The point is that his definition was seized upon by later writers and given a content which, if not justified by its original connection, made it pregnant with possibility in the thought of the new generation. So young Herder in his *Plastik*, which, although published later, was occupying his mind during the years of closest contact with the *Stürmer*, takes up Baumgarten's definition with a characteristic restatement which places it in direct antithesis to the abstraction of ideal beauty and refers it to the same fundamental principle of experience: "Nur die Bedeutung innerer Vollkommenheit ist Schönheit." Beauty is the outward expression of inner perfection, of perfect health and life and strength in every member. Beauty of human form is no abstract conception, no composite of learned rules and fanciful presuppositions. It can be caught and felt by anyone who can feel what natural correctness of form and natural expression of strength is in others or in himself.

Wilhelm Heinse, with his hedonistic view of life, most fully and consistently worked out the relation of sensuous experience to the

¹ See Haym, *Herder*, I, 255.

problem of beauty as well as to the more practical questions of art.¹ Making use of Baumgarten's formula, as did Herder, he says:

Schönheit ist Übereinstimmung mit Vollkommenheit (äussere Übereinstimmung mit innerer Vollkommenheit) ohne Fremdes, ohne Zusatz, versteht sich von selbst. Schönheit ist unverfälschte Erscheinung des ganzen Wesens, wie es nach seiner Art sein soll. Flecken darinn, toter Stoff, ist der Anfang des Hässlichen. Sie verträgt keine Vermischung, wenn sie nicht so eins geworden ist, wie die verschiedenen Farben im Sonnenstrahl; ist Reinheit für das Ohr, Rosenduft für die Zunge, und junge cirkassische Mädchenbrust für die liebewarmen Fingerspitzen. Schönheit ist Dasein der Vollkommenheit; und die Berührung des Sinnes derselben, Genuss der Liebe.²

Thus Heinse refers the conception of beauty to sensuous experience, including not only that of the eye and ear but of touch and even of the organs of taste and smell. This extension of the concept of beauty is significant as an outgrowth of the emphasis on the importance of the senses.

We are accustomed, says Heinse, to call that beautiful which we love and which comes within the scope of our limited comprehension, that which we want to become a part of us. The rest—and this holds true for all the senses—is indifferent to us. And indeed, it cannot be otherwise.³ No one can feel anything, even in the most perfect work of art, of which he has not felt something in nature or in himself. Furthermore each individual feels it in a different way and his enjoyment always bears a definite relation to his life.⁴ The savage can appreciate only those forms of beauty which appeal to his senses—qualities of strength, courage, skill, and the physical charms of his mate that excite sensual pleasure.⁵ To civilized man, also, the human body is the most beautiful form in nature, for he cannot comprehend, he cannot feel that highest beauty which is the illimitable universe with all its manifold variety, with its mysterious energy in every atom.⁶ And even in regard to the human form our appreciation of its beauty is necessarily limited by our experience. The Greeks had the most beautiful bodies because

¹ In Heinse's theorizing on the aesthetics of music his frank sensuousness plays an equally important part. "Ich glaube," he says in his *Musikalische Dialogen* (I, 58) "dass der Grund, woraus wir alle die grossen Wunder unserer Kunst erklären können, nichts weiter als die Wirkung des Tons auf die Nerven des menschlichen Körpers ist." Cf. also Nachl., Heft 54, *Werke*, V, 250.

² *Werke*, IX, 291.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 333-34.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 291, 294.

they lived under conditions that encouraged the development of everything beautiful. Because these conditions have not been reproduced there has been and can be no second Phidias. The bathing customs and athletic games of the Greeks made them familiar with the nude, whereas our own artists, for the most part, know only the beauties of dress.¹ Even if a modern artist could create anew such beauty in stone as did the ancients, it could hardly be appreciated. The Greeks were charmed with Praxiteles' statue of Phryne because they either knew the original or someone like her. A Swede would see even in the Venus of Milo only a clever bit of workmanship in marble.² Again, Rubens made such a wonderful appeal because he represented women of his own country, his own circle, with whose every expression of joy and pain he was familiar in the nude. "Eine Donna von Venedig wäre ihm nie so zum Gefühl geworden, noch weniger Lais oder Phryne, die er nie mit Augen gesehen."³ "Griechische Schönheit konnte er wie Keiner aus nichts erschaffen."⁴ Goethe in his essay "Nach Falkonet und über Falkonet" praises Rubens in similar words: "Was der Künstler nicht geliebt hat, nicht liebt, soll er nicht schildern, kann er nicht schildern. Ihr findet Rubensens Weiber zu fleischig! Ich sage euch, es waren seine Weiber, und hätt' er Himmel und Hölle, Luft, Erd und Meer mit Idealen bevölkert, so wäre er ein schlechter Ehemann gewesen, und es wäre nie kräftiges Fleisch von seinem Fleisch und Bein von seinem Bein geworden."⁵

B. THE RELATION OF ART TO NATURE

I. THE FORMULA OF IMITATION

We have seen how, in accordance with the premise of empiricism, Storm and Stress insisted upon a firm basis in the solid reality of life within or without. This plea for truth and reality, for the immediateness of nature itself, finds expression repeatedly in a demand for a return to nature. The old phrase occurs frequently enough in their writings. Nevertheless the simple statement that in opposition to the classicists, who advocated imitation of the Greeks, the empiricists of Storm and Stress urged imitation of nature would be a superficial and misleading half-truth.⁶ A study of such passages in their connection and in the light of the whole aesthetic thought of Storm and Stress will make clear how far the new school had advanced beyond the threadbare formula that had played so important a part in the aesthetic discussions of the

¹ *Werke*, IX, 296-97.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300.

³ D. J. G., III, 693.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 298-99.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

⁶ Cf. *Ulltz*, p. 16.

century and how utterly insufficient it was to express the conception of art and nature which had caught the imagination of the young *Genies*. To appreciate the truth of this contention it will be necessary to review briefly the history of the imitation formula before taking up the discussion of the new conception of art in its relation to nature.

French classicism, taking up the Aristotelian precept, had interpreted it to conform with its rationalistic premises. Nature in the larger and more inclusive sense, "*la grossière nature*," was thought of as the antithesis of reason and common sense. "*La nature et la raison*," "*naturel et raisonnable*" are frequently recurring phrases in the writings of the time, and the very association of nature with reason suggests the meaning given the former term. To Boileau only that which satisfies the claims of reason is beautiful, that is, only what possesses the attributes of the absolute, the constant, and the universal. Only that is true and only the truth is beautiful. Truth in this sense again is nature, and reason, truth, and nature are one. Since only the universal and permanent is true, is nature, poetry should not depict the individual or the eccentric, but universal human types. In the ancients are found truth and nature because they represented in Nero and Augustus and others such representative men. Antiquity *is* nature and to imitate antiquity is to use the best means the human mind has ever found to express nature in its perfection. Thus it is not the great out-of-doors but human nature, the rationalistic ideal of the perfect man, the man of the seventeenth-century salon, that classicism considered the proper object of imitation.

Gottsched, ambitious to play the part of a German Boileau, maintains in his critical works that the essence of poetry is the imitation of nature in the same restricted sense as his French preceptor. His Swiss opponents, the protagonists of imagination against reason, while employing the same formula, give it a new and more vital content, including in the poet's legitimate material on the one hand the supernatural, and on the other external nature with all its beauty of detail. They justify in theory the practice of such poets as Brockes and Haller. The function of poetry is to paint pictures on the canvas of the imagination, pictures as sensuous as those made by brush and colors. And poetry then most nearly approaches perfection when it produces the same effect with its imitation as would be produced by the things imitated. It was just such a confusion of the legitimate field of poetry and painting that Lessing sought to clear up in his *Laokoön*.

Johann Elias Schlegel attacks the problem from a somewhat different angle. While holding fast to the old formula, he demands that such

imitation should excite pleasure. In his *Abhandlung, dass die Nachahmung der Sache, der man nachahmen will, zuweilen unähnlich werden müsse* he maintains that it is permissible to depart from the original if by so doing greater pleasure is produced in the observer, for the latter finds pleasure rather in the correspondence of the work of art with his conception of the object, mistaken though it be, than in an exact reproduction of that with which he is not familiar. Furthermore such imitation must be avoided as would create horror or disgust.

Shortly after the publication of Schlegel's essay there appeared in Germany various translations of Batteux's book, *Les beaux arts réduits a un même principe*, a work which at once attained great popularity. Like Schlegel, the French aesthetician is opposed to exact imitation. As against the popular demand for exact reproduction of nature in art, he maintains that genius must not imitate nature as it is, but as reason can represent it. The artist should follow the procedure of Zeuxis, who selected beautiful traits from various models and combined them in his work. This is imitation of "la belle nature." The determining principle in this eclectic process is taste, which distinguishes between the beautiful and ugly in art as does reason between the true and false in science. And since we are flattered by nothing more than what brings us nearer perfection, taste approves when art chooses the most beautiful traits in nature or idealizes the less beautiful ones.

Ludwig von Hagedorn, whose *Betrachtungen über die Malerei* (1764) was long considered the sum total of all wisdom in the theory of art, while upholding imitation of nature, finds a place in his eclectic system for Batteux's "la belle nature" no less than for the conflicting ones of naturalism and classicism. Urging imitation of nature and of the ancients, he justifies the moral purpose of art as well as that of giving pleasure. It was this very inclusiveness and indefiniteness that made his work so popular with the general run of artists and connoisseurs.¹

Nothing could be more typical of the spirit of Storm and Stress than the immediate and violent reaction of J. G. Hamann to Hagedorn's work. His temperamental hatred of system and theory alone does not account for his indignation. Neither in the inclusive sense of Hagedorn nor in any other form did he have any sympathy with imitation as an aesthetic doctrine. A mere copyist of nature could produce no master-

¹ For a discussion of Dubois' theory of imitation and its influence, see M. H. Dewey, *Herder's Relation to the Aesthetic Theory of His Time*.

piece. No renaissance of art could be hoped for from the study of external nature as urged by the critics. "Wer Leidenschaft und Phantasie," he cried, "den schönen Künsten entziehen will, stellt ihrer Ehre und ihrem Leben wie ein Meuchelmörder nach." In his rejection of the current aesthetic doctrine and his shift of emphasis to the creative process within the artist himself, Hamann truly speaks as the Father of Storm and Stress. It was a new conception of nature and of man in his relation to nature that brought the "Magus des Nordens" and his spiritual children far beyond the pale of the discussion whose trend we have just indicated. Let us see what this new conception was that so vivified and inspired their conception of art.

2. STORM AND STRESS ATTITUDE

Orthodox Christianity had looked upon nature as a principle hostile to the spiritual interests of man. It was for man to subdue the carnal and material within him, to rise above nature. Without life in itself, nature was guided by its Creator from without and the worship of nature seemed a sacrilege because it gave to the created world the glory due its Author alone.

The philosophy of the Enlightenment was as hostile as Christianity itself to any sympathetic attitude toward nature. Since reason was the highest faculty in man, that which distinguished him from all other living creatures, it followed that nature, not being endowed with reason, could only be the servant of man and had no significance or importance except as it might aid him in the attainment of his purposes. Thus rationalistic Deism arrived at the same standpoint as Christianity, at disdain for nature and the demand that man should liberate himself from her and rise above her.

Rationalism, then, conceived of the created world as a great machine, made and kept in motion by an external and distant power. This was the view of Descartes. Then Newton and his successors discovered various laws according to which this mechanism functioned. But this did not at all imply attributing life to nature itself. Nature existed and changed in accordance with law, but controlled by a will from without, not from within. In this respect rationalism also agreed with orthodoxy, regarding nature as dead, as being without an independent life principle in itself. D'Holbach, to whose work reference has been made before, even denies the existence of any divine intelligence. He speaks of the universe as "that vast assemblage of everything that exists" and

which "presents only matter and motion; the whole offers to our contemplation nothing but an immense and uninterrupted succession of causes and effects."

It is not surprising that contemporary poetry could find no inspiration in such views of nature and that consequently nature should play such a small part in it. When gradually in the second quarter of the century, nature did become increasingly a subject for poetic treatment, this was due to a new emphasis on one of its supposed attributes which implied a merging of the rationalistic and orthodox viewpoint. Nature was glorified as being designed in all its parts and all its manifestations for a certain end, namely, to please and serve the needs of man and thus reveal the greatness and goodness of the Creator. It is the utilitarian principle of rationalism and the Christian doctrine of the creation and governing of the world by God that are united in this teleological view of nature, a view represented in German philosophy especially by Leibnitz, the great mediator between rationalism and Christian orthodoxy. In poetry the same view is represented by Brockes in his *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott* (1721-48), written under the direct influence of Thompson's *Seasons*. In his detailed descriptions of natural scenery, delighting in color and light effects, but with only an occasional genuinely poetic flight, his declared purpose is "through his own pleasure to rekindle the praise of the wise Creator in himself and others." His close observation was not without great importance in teaching his generation to observe nature and her moods, but the dominating moral purpose which led him to seek from all plant and animal life evidence for the teleological argument often carried him to the point of the ridiculous.

Albrecht Haller, especially in his later poems, gives evidence of greater depth of real feeling and is in advance of his age in his appreciation of the more majestic aspects of nature, which, however, he too looks at from the moralizing and utilitarian standpoint. This is true of Friedrich von Hagedorn as well, who shows a love for the gentler aspects of nature and sings the praises of country life, thus pointing forward to the movement which later received such a powerful impulse through the influence of Rousseau. The poetic efforts of the Anacreontics, influenced in form and in idyllic coloring by classic and modern bucolics, show a strong religious tendency in their appreciation of nature. Like them, Wieland sees love and God manifested in nature, order and law being due to His power. Solomon Gessner owed his popularity to his happy expression of the longing of the generation for the simpler mode of life but does not go beyond his predecessors in his interpretation of nature.

Gottlieb Friedrich Klopstock strikes a new note in German literature. Never before had such a depth of feeling been attained as is shown in his odes and in the *Messias*. The following passage written by one of Klopstock's innumerable admirers reflects better than any passage of his poetry the sentimental, dreamy, and elegiac love of nature so characteristic of him:

Sein Buch sind nicht menschliche Bücher, sondern die Natur und die Gesellschaft. Er soll malen und die Natur. So muss er sie denn kennen. Darum liebt er sie so. Darum wandelt er am Bache und weint. Darum geht er aus im Lenze auf den Blütenfeldern, und sein Auge fließt von Thränen über. Ihn erfüllt die ganze Schöpfung mit Wehmut und Wonne. Er irrt umher wie ein Träumender vom Gebirge ins Thal. Wo er einen Bach sieht, verfolgt er seinen Lauf, wo ein umkränzter Hügel sich erhebt, muss er ihn erklimmen. Ein Fluss . . . ach könnte er mit ihm in den Ozean stürzen! Ein Felsen . . . o säh er von seinen zackichten Spitzen in die umliegenden Fluren hinab! Ein Falke schwebt über ihm . . . ach hätte er seine Flügel und schwebte so viel näher an den Sternen! Stundenlang steht er bei einem Blümchen still, betrachtet ein Moos, wirft sich ins Gras nieder, umkränzt seinen Hut mit Kornblumen und Eichenlaub. Er geht aus in Mondenschein und besucht die Gräber. Da denkt er sich Tod und Unsterblichkeit und ewiges Leben. Nichts hält ihn auf in seiner Betrachtung. Es ist nichts bei ihm ohne Beziehung. Alles Bild, jedes sichtbare Ding wird von einem unsichtbaren Gefährten begleitet, er fühlt alles um sich, so warm, so ganz, so nahe!¹

This enthusiastic description of Kramer's is quite typical of the Klopstock cult which spread over Germany at this time.

The poets of the Göttinger Dichterbund, Claudius Boie, Hölty, Voss, the Stolbergs, ardent admirers of Klopstock, give sincere and unaffected expression to their sentimental love for nature. Friedrich, the most inspired of these prophets of nature, excels them all. Biese quotes his *Gebet* as typical of the time:

Süsse, heilige Natur, Lass mich gehen auf deiner Spur!
 Leite mich an deiner Hand wie ein Kind am Gängelband!
 Wenn ich dan ermüdet bin, Sink' ich dir am Busen hin,
 Atme süsse Himmelslust, Hangend an der Mutterbrust!
 Ach wie wohl ist mir bei dir! Will dich lieben für und für!
 Lass mich gehen auf deiner Spur, Süsse, heilige Natur!

Storm and Stress shared with its generation the sentimental cult of nature fostered by the poetry of Klopstock, the *sich hineinsenken* in nature, the desire to see in her a reflection of one's own mood which

¹ C. Friedrich Kramer, *Klopstock. In Fragmenten aus Briefen von Tellow an Elisa*. Hamburg, 1777, p. 43.

Rousseau's influence had made so popular in Germany. Lotte and Werther are true children of their time: "Sie sah gen Himmel und auf mich, ich sah ihr Auge thränenvoll, sie legte ihre Hand auf die meinige und sagte—Klopstock! Ich versank in dem Strome von Empfindungen, den sie in dieser Losung über mich ausgoss. Ich ertrugs nicht, neigte mich auf ihre Hand und küsste sie unter den wonnevollsten Thränen."¹ Yet this sentimental love of nature, characteristic as it is of the *Genies*, with their strong emphasis on the emotional life, expresses but one phase of their attitude. How far they went beyond this mere sentimentalism, what a new depth and fulness of meaning they gave to the concept, will become clear from the following characteristic passages from their works.

Werther not only finds in nature a reflection of his own transient moods. At times his spirit is crushed by its heartless reality. In the following passage, the continually recurring thought of the unceasing activity of nature, at once creative and destructive, is especially to be noted:

Das volle warme Gefühl meines Herzens an der lebendigen Natur, das mich mit so viel Wonne überströmte, das rings umher die Welt mir zu einem Paradiese schuf, wird mir jetzt zu einem unerträglichen Peiniger, zu einem quälenden Geiste, der mich auf allen Wegen verfolgt. Wenn ich sonst . . . alles um mich her keimen und quellen sah, . . . und das Gewebere um mich her, . . . mir alles das innere glühende heilige Leben der Natur eröffnete, wie umfasst ich das all mit warmem Herzen. Und ich sah sie wirken und schaffen in einander und in den Tiefen der Erde, all die Kräfte unergründlich. Und nun über der Erde und unter dem Himmel wimmeln die Geschlechter der Geschöpfe all, und alles, alles bevölkert mit tausendfachen Gestalten . . . Vom unzugänglichen Gebürge über die Einöde, die kein Fuss betrat, bis ans Ende des unbekannten Ozeans weht der Geist des ewigschaffenden und freut sich jedes Staubs, der ihn vernimmt und lebt. Ach damals, wie oft hab ich mich mit Fittigen eines Kranichs, der über mich hinflog, zu dem Ufer des ungemessenen Meeres geschnt, aus dem schäumenden Becher des Unendlichen jene schwellende Lebenswonne zu trinken und nur einen Augenblick in der eingeschränkten Kraft meines Busens einen Tropfen der Seligkeit des Wesens zu fühlen, das alles in sich und durch sich hervorbringt.² . . . Mir untergräbt das Herz die verzehrende Kraft, die im All der Natur verborgen liegt, die nichts gebildet hat, das nicht seinen Nachbarn, nicht sich selbst zerstörte. Und so taumele ich beängstigt! Himmel und Erde und all die webenden Kräfte um mich her! Ich sehe nichts, als ein ewig verschlingendes, ewig wiederkäuendes Ungeheuer.³

In his review of Sulzer's *Die schönen Künste*, Goethe quotes the author as saying: "In der ganzen Schöpfung stimmt alles darin überein,

¹ D. J. G., III, 258.

² *Ibid.*, p. 290.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

dass das Aug und die andern Sinnen von allen Seiten her durch angenehme Eindrücke gerührt werden."¹ The reviewer emphatically objects to this statement. Does not that which makes an unpleasant impression upon us belong in the plan of nature as well as her loveliness? Are not raging storms and floods and eruptions and death as truly evidences of her eternal activity as the gloriously rising sun over blossoming vineyards and fragrant orange groves?² "Was wir von Natur sehen, ist Kraft, die Kraft verschlingt, nichts gegenwärtig, alles vorübergehend; tausend Keime zertreten, jeden Augenblick tausend gebohren; gross und bedeuteund, mannigfaltig ins Unendliche; schön und hässlich, gut und bö, alles mit gleichem Rechte neben einander existirend."³

Der Wanderer, in the poem bearing this title, says:

Natur, du ewig keimende,
Schaffst jeden zum Genuss des Lebens,
Deine Kinder all
Hast mütterlich mit einem
Erbteil ausgestattet.⁴

Faust has devoted himself to magic, as he says, in order that he might discover:

. . . . was die Welt
Im innersten zusammenhält
Schau alle Wirkenskraft und Samen.⁵

On beholding the symbol of Macrocosm he cries:

War es ein Gott der diese Zeichen schrieb?
Die mit geheimnisvollem Trieb
Die Kräfte der Natur enthüllen?
Bin ich ein Gott? Mir wird so licht!
Ich schau in diesen reinen Zügen
Die würckende Natur vor meiner Seele liegen
.
Wie alles sich zum Ganzen webt
Eins in dem andern würckt und lebt!
.
Wo fass ich dich unendliche Natur!
Euch Brüste wo! Ihr Quellen alles Lebens
An denen Himmel und Erde hängt,
Dahin die welcke Brust sich drängt.⁶

¹ D. j. G., II, 472.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 473.

⁵ Urfaust, *Inselverlag*, p. 11.

² *Ibid.*, p. 472.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

The earth spirit appearing, declaims:

In Lebensfluthen, im Thatensturm
 Wall ich auf und ab,
 Webe hin und her!
 Geburt und Grab,
 Ein ewiges Meer,
 Ein wechselnd Weben
 Ein glühend Leben!
 So schaff ich am sausenden Webstuhl der Zeit
 Und würcke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid.¹

The following passages from Herder show how he delighted in similar expressions in his references to nature:

lebend Weben der Natur²
 innen in den Eingeweiden der Natur³
 wie die Natur da webt und auftrennt, zerstört und sticket⁴

Wer jemals auf dem wüsten Weltmeer mit Nacht und Todesfurcht umhüllt, auf Morgenröthe gehofft, wird diese Scene gefühlt haben. . . . Geist des Himmels! Hauch Gottes! Wie er sich von droben her senkt; die Fluten durchwühlt, emporwebt; wo er wandelt, webt. Himmlische Gegenwart und alles ist Schauer—Fühle den wehenden durchwehenden Nachtgeist. . . . webender Geist Gottes auf der Tiefe . . . Alles voll Regung, Gesang, Freude und Leben.⁵

das alte, schöne, so oft missverstandende Bild aller Geheimnisse, der grosse Schleier der Natur.

Schönste Sommernacht! Ich schwimme in Rosen und blühenden Bohnen und Blumen und Hecken und Nachtviole, in tausend Düften! O Mutter Natur, wo kenne ich deine Kinder alle . . . die jetzt sich schmücken und paaren und Freude duften in der schönsten Brautnacht. . . . Unendlich auch! Unerschöpflich bist du schön, Mutter Natur.⁶

Compare the following passages from Heinse:

. . . und dann in Wonnegefühlen meine Seele ganz göttlich ins Weltall zerfließt, die lichten Feuerkugeln und deren Töchter durchdringt und darinn lebt und fühlt, als in ihrem eigenen Leibe, und das höchste Werk der Schöpfung findet: immerwährenden Krieg und immerwährendes Leben, gross und schön und verzehrendneuerschaffend, Blüthe, Reife und Abfallen, und Keim und Samen und Pflanze und Gewächs überall vermischt und vereinigt und ewige Ordnung . . . o dann, Mein Freund! erst dann ist der Mensch ein Ebenbild Gottes, lebt und webt in ihm, dem Einzigen, aus dem alles Wesen und

¹ Urfaust, Inselverlag, p. 15.

⁴ Ält. Urk., I, 218.

² S. W. S., XV, 46.

⁵ Ält. Urk.

³ Ibid., XV, 236.

⁶ St. Johannesnachtstraum, 1772.

alle Bildung kömmt; von dessen Grösse und allwirkender stiller Stärke die guten Geschöpfe, die seinen Namen am oftsten nennen, selten mehr, als eine dunkle Empfindung haben und dessen Güte dem aus der Natur verirrtten Philosophen Leben gibt, wenn er in seinem "Système de la Nature" ruft: "Thu mir was! ich sage, du bist nicht!"¹

Ich habe nun meine Lust an der schönen Unordnung der Natur, etc. . . . jene eine weit lebendigere Ordnung in sich enthält als die künstliche.²

Höchste Schönheit ist die unermessliche Natur in den ungeheuren weiten Räumen des Aethers mit ihren heiligen furchtbaren Kräften, die bis in den kleinsten Staub sich regen und ewig lebendig sind.³

It must be clear that the view of nature reflected in such passages had left far behind the old mechanical and teleological theories as well as the shallow sentimentalism of the age. To Storm and Stress nature is an eternally creative and destructive force, "birth and grave," full of "intoxication and disorder" and yet working according to invisible laws. A consistent empiricist could not deny that in its workings it was not always benevolent and sympathetic, but often cruel and ruthless. One great spirit filled the universe, uniting its various manifestations into one organic whole. Men could not be thought of as outside of and opposed to nature, for the same energy expressed itself in him and in his creative activity as was evident in the visible world about him.

Such a highly potentialized view of nature could not conceivably be satisfied by the old formula of imitation of external nature, in its various forms so characteristically a product of the Enlightenment, conceiving as it did of art as an intellectual process consciously guided by rule and example. The new conception of organic nature posited a fundamentally different ideal of art and the artist in relation to nature—an ideal that, as we shall see, struggled to find expression in new forms.

In his *Soliloquy or Advice to an Author*, Shaftesbury had said, "But for the man who truly and in a just sense deserves the name of poet, and who as a real master or architect in the kind, can describe both men and manners and give to an action its just body and proportions, he will be found, if I mistake not, a very different creature. Such a poet is indeed a second maker; a just Prometheus under Jove. Like that sovereign artist or universal plastic nature he forms a whole coherent and proportioned in itself, with due subjection and subordination of constituent parts."⁴

¹ *Heinsses Werke* (Schüddekopf) III, 2.

² *Ibid.*, III, 471.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

⁴ Robertson's edition, London, 1900, p. 135.

The *Conjectures on Original Composition* of Edward Young, appearing in a German translation in 1560, attained no less a popularity with the new school than the same author's *Night Thoughts* enjoyed among an earlier generation. "Imitations," says the author of the *Conjectures*, "are of two kinds: one of nature, one of authors; the first we call originals and confine the term imitation to the second."¹ Thus any thought of "imitation of nature" in the traditional sense is at once excluded. For "an original may be said to be of a vegetable nature: it rises spontaneously from the vital root of genius, it grows, it is not made: imitations are often a sort of manufacture wrought up by those mechanics, art and labor, out of pre-existent materials not their own."² "What, for the most part," he continues, "mean we by genius, but the power of accomplishing great things without the means generally reputed necessary to that end? A genius differs from a good understanding, as a magician from a good architect; that raises his structure by means invisible; this by the skilful use of common tools. Hence genius has ever been supposed to partake of something divine."³

Shaftesbury and Young were so widely read in Germany and their ideas were absorbed in current thought to such an extent that it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine definite influences. But this new and vital conception of art, this sublime confidence in the rights and powers of genius, however these ideas may have come to them, appealed tremendously to the young generation. They were in harmony with their entire view of nature and life and they enthusiastically seized upon them, adapted and developed them, and made them their own.

The thought of the artist as a Prometheus, a "second maker," became a favorite one with Goethe, who repeatedly makes use of the comparison. In the dramatic fragment which bears this title, Prometheus takes defiant delight in the children of his own creation, formed in his own image:

Hier meine Welt, mein All!
 Hier fühl' ich mich;
 Hier alle meine Wünsche
 In körperlichen Gestalten
 Meinen Geist so tausendfach
 Getheilt und ganz in meinen teuren Kindern⁴

¹ *Works*, V, 89.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

² *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁴ D. J. G., III, 451.

Hier sitz' ich, forme Menschen
 Nach meinem Bilde,
 Ein Geschlecht das mir gleich sey,
 Zu leiden, zu weinen;
 Zu geniessen und zu freuen sich.
 Und dein nicht zu achten,
 Wie ich:—¹

Such a creator was Shakespeare who "wetteiferte mit dem Prometheus, bildete ihm Zug von Zug seine Menschen nach, nur in Colossalischer Grösse; darin liegt's dass wir unsre Brüder verkennen; und dann belebte er sie alle mit dem Hauch seines Geistes, er redet aus allen, und man erkennt ihre Verwandtschaft."²

The aspiration of the artist in *Kenner und Künstler* expresses a similar thought:

O ratet! helft mir!
 Dass ich mich vollende!
 Wo ist der Urquell der Natur
 Daraus ich schöpfend
 Himmel fühl und Leben
 In die Fingerspitzen hervor!
 Dass ich mit Göttersinn
 Und Menschenhand
 Vermög zu bilden,

.....

In his *Anmerkungen übers Theater*, Lenz agrees with Aristotle that the essence of poetry is imitation, but he extends the meaning of the word to include imitation of God, the Creator himself: "Wir sind, oder wollen wenigstens sein, die erste Sprosse auf der Leiter der frei handelnden selbständigen Geschöpfe, und da wir eine Welt hie, da um uns sehen, die der Beweis eines unendlichen frei handelnden Wesens ist, so ist der erste Trieb, den wir in unsrer Seele fühlen, die Begierde's ihm nachzuthun; da aber die Welt keine Brücken hat, und wir uns schon mit den Dingen, die da sind, begnügen müssen, fühlen wir wenigstens Zuwachs unsrer Existenz, Glückseligkeit ihm nachzuäffen, seine Schöpfung im Kleinen zu schaffen."³ A genius in the popular sense, he continues, is one who can penetrate to the essence of things without the ordinary processes of sensuous experience. That faculty alone might make an excellent critic or reader, but more is needed if he is to create, not merely imitate—enthusiasm, creative power, the poetic gift.

¹ D. j. G., III, 468.

² *Ibid.*, II, 42.

³ *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 204.

"Der wahre Dichter verbindet nicht in seiner Einbildungskraft, wie es ihm gefällt, was die Herren die schöne Natur zu nennen belieben, was aber, mit ihrer Erlaubniss, nichts als die verfehlte Natur ist. Er nimmt Standpunkt—und dann muss er so verbinden. Man könnte sein Germälde mit der Sache verwechseln, und der Schöpfer sieht auf ihn hinab, wie auf die kleinen Götter, die mit seinem Funken in der Brust auf den Thronen der Erde sitzen und seinem Beispiel gemäss eine kleine Welt erhalten."¹

If the artist, then, is a Prometheus, a creator, a "second maker," his work must partake of the character of the created work of God. This essential analogy of art with nature, the organic conception of art which is so peculiarly a doctrine of Storm and Stress, is nowhere given more bold and emphatic utterance than in Goethe's essay *Von deutscher Baukunst*. The Strassburg cathedral loomed up before him as a "Babelgedanke, ganz, gross und bis in den kleinsten Teil notwendig schön wie Bäume Gottes."² It was precisely the realization of the organic unity of the great work, the necessary relation of its multitudinous detail to the whole, that dawned upon young Goethe with all the force of a revelation. He could see now why the medieval architect had multiplied the massive walls, so essentially a feature of northern architecture, he could understand how this mass of detail, far from being "in bad taste, unnecessary, fanciful, unnatural patchwork" had the same organic interrelation as the countless leaves and branches of a giant tree; how, as in the works of eternal nature herself, everything even to the minutest part, was proportion, all aiming toward the whole. Two years later, returning to the cathedral with his friend Lenz, he was again carried away by the same irresistible feeling of awe and reverence that had inspired the earlier essay. "Du bist Eins und lebendig," he says in the prayer of the "Dritte Wallfahrt," "nicht zusammengetragen und geflickt. Vor dir, wie vor jedem grossen Gedanken der Schöpfung, wird in der Seele rege was auch Schöpfungskraft in ihr ist."³ And when in company with Lenz the reverent worshiper's round was completed, the conviction had grown upon them both "dass Schöpfungskraft im Künstler sei aufschwellendes Gefühl der Verhältnisse, Maasse und des Gehörigen, und dass nur durch diese ein selbständig Werk, wie andere Geschöpfe durch ihre individuelle Keimkraft hervorgetrieben werde."⁴

Even in his earlier writings Herder had maintained that there exists in great poems an organic and not a merely artificial and me-

¹ *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 207.

³ *Ibid.*, III, 694.

² D. J. G., II, p. 204.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 696.

chanical interrelation of parts. And as he develops this idea of organic creation, the poet is lost from sight. The poem comes into existence, grows out of the material itself; there are no artificial adornments, no accidental additions, everything is essential and has its own place. The myths lived on the tongues of the ancient Greeks and of their own accord assumed poetic form. Thus a people, a deed, an epoch creates its own expression in song.

Even in the *Fragmente*, but especially in later writings after the voyage to France, this conception becomes more prominent and finds new forms of expression. Such recurring phrases as the following are significant: "Geist der Natur, sprachsingende Zeiten," "natürlich roher Gesang der Poesie," "Stimme der Natur," "Natursprache," "eine unerdachte, unerfundene, unmittelbare Äusserung einer fühlbaren Empfindung" (V. 150), "Zeit der wahren poetischen Natur"; "es ist kein anderer Zusammenhang zwischen den Teilen des (Natur-) Gesanges als unter den Bäumen und Gebüsch im Walde, unter den Felsen und Grotten in der Einöde, als unter den Szenen der Begebenheit selbst" (V. 197).

The entire essay on the origin of language rests on the fundamental assumption that all poetry and the language that forms its vehicle of expression were not the product of reasoning individual effort but the natural unconscious creation of all the powers of the human spirit. Human speech is a "Natursprache—eine unerdachte, unerfundene, unmittelbare Äusserung einer fühlbaren Empfindung" (V. 160). "Jede Familie von Wörtern ist ein verwachsenes Gebüsch um eine sinnliche Hauptidee, um eine heilige Eiche" (V. 54).

Wagner, echoing Herder, speaks of "die dunkle Art" in which all "Naturpoesie" comes into existence; it is "am Busen der Natur gesäugt," a "lebendige, schöne, blühende Tochter der Rede, die auf dem wilden Gebirge duftet."¹ And F. H. Jacobi, writing to Goethe, uses the same comparison: "Wie die Blume sich entfaltet, wie die Saat ruft, wie der Baum in die Höhe wächst und sich krönt."

Heinse, though less fully developing the idea in his aesthetic writings, clearly has such an organic conception in mind when he speaks of Rubens as having the "Naturgabe, das Mahlerische in einer Begebenheit, an Ort und Stelle, in einer Gegend zu fassen oder hineinzudichten, und in ein neues lebendiges Ganzes zu bringen" and he adds "O heilige Natur, die alle deine Werke hervorbringst in Liebe, Leben und Feuer und nicht mit Zirkel, Lineal, Nachäfferei, dir allein will ich ewig huldigen."² "Die

¹ *Briefe an Merck*, I, 14.

² *Werke*, IX, 344.

Gestalt u. die wesentlichen Teile verschiedener Formen von Darstellung," he says elsewhere, "können anatomischer weise beschrieben werden: hingegen lässt sich von dem Zusammenhang selbst wenig mehr sagen als wie das Kind im Mutterleib entsteht."¹

We have seen in the present chapter how in the thought of Storm and Stress a new nature-panteism, at once realistic and subjective and consonant with it, a new conception of the artist and of art had taken the place of traditional ideas and formulas. To discuss the relation of these new ideals to the problem of beauty which occupied such a prominent place in the aesthetic discussions of the day will be the purpose of the following chapter."

C. STORM AND STRESS CRITERIA OF BEAUTY

I. THE PROBLEM OF EXPRESSION

The chief problem with which speculation on questions of art has always been concerned is that of the nature of beauty itself. Plato and after him Winckelmann and the academic school of our day consider abstract beauty to be one of the attributes of divine perfection, a thing absolute, one and indivisible, consequently universal, unchanged and unchangeable, dominating all peoples and all art in all times. Baumgarten, the modern founder of the science of aesthetics, gave in his well-known definition of beauty as the perfection of sensuous perception, a suggestive and flexible formula about which centered much of the aesthetic discussion of the following years. Toward the problem as a purely academic one we should hardly expect Storm and Stress to assume any other attitude than one of indifference or disgust. Herder and Heinse took up Baumgarten's formula but adapted it to their own practical and empirical viewpoint. Lenz's reaction is thoroughly characteristic: "Der Henker mag sie (die Schönheit) definieren. Ich fühle sie und jage ihr nach." Even before coming to Strassburg Goethe had written in a letter to Friederike Oeser: "Und was ist Schönheit? Sie ist Licht und nicht Nacht. Dämmerung; eine Geburt von Wahrheit und Unwahrheit." These words, in reality an effort to avoid rather than to give a definition of beauty, are born of the mystical mood which possessed Goethe at this time and which persisted in a less marked degree even during the Strassburg period. Replying to a friend who had questioned him regarding the nature of beauty, Goethe referred him to his own experience, advising him rather to seek it than to attempt its definition. "Einmal für allemal bleibt sie unerklärlich; sie erscheint

¹ *Werke*, III, 466.

uns wie ein Traum, wenn wir die Werke der grossen Dichter und Maler, kurz aller empfindenden Künstler betrachten; es ist ein schwimmendes glänzendes Schattenbild, dessen Umriss keine Definition hascht."¹

Nevertheless, with all their outspoken contempt for such theoretical speculation on beauty, the *Genies* could not altogether escape the problem. As a question of practical aesthetics it was bound to confront the artist as soon as he would give artistic expression to his idea or justify that expression. Given the tendencies of Storm and Stress as they have been noted, the very denial of the existence of any abstract ideal of beauty must needs posit other criteria of the beautiful. A study of what especially Goethe, Lenz, and Heinse, in addition always to Herder, say on this point need not leave us in doubt as to what these criteria were. We cannot, however, fully appreciate the significance of their utterances in the question without some clearer understanding of the trend of the contemporary discussion to which they evidently bear a direct relation.

In the 50's and 60's appeared the epoch-making works of Winckelmann which exerted an influence so powerful and widespread that no one who had either a theoretical or practical interest in art could avoid taking an attitude toward his doctrine. The writings of the most prominent thinkers of Germany at the time, Mendelssohn, Lessing, Herder repeatedly pay deference to him and the flood of mediocre literature on aesthetic questions of which Lessing² and Herder³ complain owed its inspiration largely to the same source.

"Die Schönheit soll sein, wie das vollkommenste Wasser, aus dem Schosse der Quelle geschöpft, das, je weniger Geschmack es hat, desto gesunder geachtet wird, weil es von allen fremden Theilen geläutert ist."⁴ This striking passage of Winckelmann has often been quoted in explanation of his doctrine that beauty was the highest aim of Greek art. But this and other isolated expressions about simple and noble beauty to be found in Winckelmann's writings, which seem to confine the beautiful to the abstract and the formal, do not represent his whole thought. That he cannot be reckoned as narrowing the range of beauty to a single abstract type, to the exclusion of all expression, is clear from numerous other passages. Beauty without expression, he says, would be characterless and expression without beauty unpleasant. But the artist must limit himself to a certain degree of expression of passion. Unrestrained expression changes the features and the pos-

¹ D. j. G., I, 234.

³ Erstes Wäldchen, *idem*, p. 161.

² *Laokoön* (Howard's edition), p. 36.

⁴ *Werke*, I (1847), 128-29.

ture and consequently the forms that compose beauty. The greater this change, the more detrimental it is to beauty. Repose is the condition which is most characteristic of beauty (der Schönheit der eigent-lichste Zustand). The more repose is reflected in the posture of the body the more adapted it is to represent the true character of the soul; in all attitudes that depart from the state of repose, the soul is not in its most natural condition but in a violent and forced one. It is grand and noble only in the state of unity, in the state of composure. In this composure, however, the soul must be given features that are proper to it and to it alone in order to give it a form that is at once calm and active, but not dull or indifferent.

Thus the masterpieces of Greek art are characterized by a noble simplicity and a calm grandeur (edle Einfalt und stille Grösse) in features and in posture. As the depth of the sea always remains calm, however much the surface may be disturbed, so in Greek sculpture, whatever the passions that may be thought of as raging within, the expression of face and attitude of body always reflect a great and composed soul. Of this truth *Laokoön* is a striking example. The pain that makes itself apparent in all the muscles and tendons of the body does not express itself as rage in face and posture, but physical pain and grandeur of soul are, as it were, balanced by being distributed throughout the body. Nowhere, then, in ancient statues is expression ever so violent as to impair beauty. The expression of passion, ever proud and correct, is always subordinated to beauty. In this the Greeks followed nature less than the ideally beautiful and rejected everything that would have denoted only this or that person in particular. Their aim was to make every work of art fulfil its one purpose without the admixture of any other quality. Jupiter was all majesty, Hercules all strength. Everything was neglected that was not necessarily associated with the main idea. Thus expression as an element essential to beauty cannot be excluded, but as one that can easily be detrimental to beauty must always be subordinated—this seems to be the sum of the whole.

Lessing, in his *Laokoön*, makes an emphatic protest against what he refers to as a current tendency to extend the limits of art and include as its object all of visible nature, of which beauty, in his opinion, constitutes only a minor part. Truth and expression, according to those who hold this view, are the first principles of art. As nature herself sacrifices beauty to higher purposes, so according to this conception, the artist must subordinate it to his general purpose and not pursue it farther than truth and expression permit. Lessing, on the contrary,

maintains with Winckelmann that beauty is the highest law, not only of Greek art, but of all art. All else that is not consistent with beauty must yield to it, or must be subordinated. Passions that distort the face and figure and so destroy the beautiful lines that characterize them in moments of composure were not represented by the Greek artists, or were reduced by them to a point where they were capable of a certain degree of beauty. So, for example, anger was tempered to seriousness and anguish to sorrow. In the *Laokoön*, in accordance with this principle, a cry became a sigh, not because crying would betray an ignoble soul, but because it would distort the face in a disgusting manner. Lessing's theory of the "fruitful moment" and his further development of the distinction between painting and sculpture on the one hand and poetry on the other does not interest us here. We are concerned here with his insistence on beauty as the first principle of art, his careful limitation of expressiveness and its subordination to beauty. In the notes for the second part of *Laokoön*, written after the reading of Winckelmann's history of Greek art, while his views suffer no essential modification, Lessing more specifically does admit into beauty the "permanent expression" which is not violent and which is not only compatible with beauty but introduces more variety in beauty itself.

Lessing had used a statement of Winckelmann's regarding *Laokoön* as a starting point for his essay on the limitations of painting and poetry. The critics had seized upon Lessing's viewpoint as an outright challenge to Winckelmann. Herder,¹ as a sincere admirer of both men, objects to Lessing's work being taken as a polemic and gives each due credit, but undertakes to correct and amplify Lessing's argument at various points. Winckelmann had admired the self-restraint of a great soul reflected in *Laokoön*, which he used as an example of the "edle Einfalt und stille Grösse" of Greek art. Lessing, intent upon his thesis, while admitting the fact, denies the generalization and holds that crying out with pain as a natural expression of emotion is common in classic poetry. Herder's reaction to the question is significant. Neither the suppression of emotion nor its unrestrained expression is a general trait of Homer's heroes. His characters are individuals, each unlike the other in speech and gestures no less than in thoughts and emotions. "Jeder ist eine eigne Menschenseele, die sich in keinem andern äussert." Herder's objection here is quite consistent with his

¹ For an excellent discussion of Herder's conception of the significant in art, see Professor Schütze's study: "The Fundamental Ideas in Herder's Thought," *Modern Philology*, Vol. XIX.

whole philosophy of individualism. His respect for the classical tradition in art and for the authority of Winckelmann and Lessing does not permit him, however, to be equally consistent in his attitude toward the problem of expression in art. With a careful interpretation of his own he agrees that the Greeks represented nothing but the beautiful as the principal object of art instead of seeking to make exact reproduction their main purpose. He agrees with Winckelmann and Lessing that beauty is the highest law of Greek art and that violent postures and ugly distortions were either avoided by the artist or subordinated. In further substantial agreement with Winckelmann, Herder adds that since the sculptor was to create a work which would make permanent one main conception or attribute, he must choose one that was most essential in the subject, namely beauty. The ugly and horrible were secondary ideas and when necessary were represented only as such.

Another phase of the same problem of expression is broached in the original draft of the *Plastik*, where Herder is concerned with the distinction between painting and sculpture on the basis of their relation to the senses of sight and touch. The human body, with the representation of which plastic art is chiefly concerned, is the "sinnlich gemachte Vorstellung der Seele," a "fühlbar gewordene Seele." As such it must in its various forms reflect various conditions of the soul. Various shapes of the forehead represent the "Gesinnung," an inclined position of the head may signify meditation, a full chest implies courage; the position of the limbs is equally expressive. In the human body, as in its perfect representation in Greek sculpture, there is an absolute correspondence, even in each muscular detail, to an inner state.

Thus Herder takes a step farther than his predecessors, but he hastens to anticipate any false construction of his attitude on the question. He has used the Greek statues in the development of the idea of the body as the "fühlbargewordene Seele," because they represent numerous examples of the human form in its highest perfection. "Man verstehe mich," he says, "dass ich keine Physiognomien der Seele schreibe, wie diese sich nach mancherlei Minen und Bildungen zu erkennen gebe, und wie man also aus der Beschaffenheit der Lenden und Zehen auf den individuellen Charakter eines Menschen in einem individuellen Zeitpunkt schliessen könne. Man hat dieses thörichte Zeugnis so viel und die neueren haben die individuellen Bemerkungen der alten auf eine so wüste sinnlose art zusammengestoppelt. . . . Nicht die Gestalten jeder einzelnen Seele in jedem einzeln Zustande und jeder einzelnen

Gestalt des Körpers, also in dreifachem Verstande individuell, errathen, sondern von allen Dreien ganz das Gegentheil, die ganze Gestalt der menschlichen Seele überhaupt, in einem dauernden Zustande, aus der ganzen Gestalt des Körpers . . . durch Erfahrungen erläutern: das ist mein Werk."

The slighting reference to Lavater's work is interesting as showing how timid Herder, with his marked deference to classic tradition, was in applying in the realm of plastic art the very individualistic principle which he so ardently championed in other spheres, notably, as we shall see, in that of language.

Through his Leipzig teacher, Oeser, the friend and admirer of Winckelmann, young Goethe had become familiar with the epoch-making ideas of Winckelmann, and he tells in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* of the stir caused in his circle of friends by the reading of the *Laokoön*. Herder's sojourn in Strassburg in 1770 brought to him with all the warmth and freshness of personal contact those fruitful ideas that we find embodied in the *Fragmente* and other products of the years immediately following—the rights of individuality, originality and national spirit, popular poetry and language, Shakespeare—ideas not altogether strange to Goethe, but coming to him now with a fulness and force before unknown. That the young hero-worshiper in his youthful enthusiasm should carry these ideas to extremes of which Herder himself could not approve is not surprising. Especially is this true of Goethe's application of the idea of originality and individualism in the realm of art.

The most complete and striking expression of the Storm and Stress attitude is that given by Goethe in his famous essay on Gothic architecture. "Let the creative instinct," says the young enthusiast, "common to all men, savage or cultured, assert itself, let inward, single individual feeling be given the free and unhampered expression it demands and the result is art. Indeed such characteristic art is the only true art."¹ This bold

¹ Because of its importance we quote the passage in full: "Lass einen Missverstand uns nicht trennen, lass die weiche Lehre neuerer Schönheiteley dich für das bedeutende Rauhe nicht verzärteln, dass nicht zuletzt deine kränkelnde Empfindung nur eine unbedeutende Glätte ertragen könne. Sie wollen euch glauben machen, die schönen Künste seien entstanden aus dem Hang, den wir haben sollen, die Dinge rings um uns zu verschönern. Das ist nicht wahr! Denn in dem Sinne, darin es wahr sein könne, braucht wohl der Bürger und Handwerker die Worte, kein Philosoph.

"Die Kunst ist lange bildend eh sie schön ist und doch so wahre, grosse Kunst, ja, oft wahrer und grösser als die schöne selbst. Denn in dem Menschen ist eine bildende Natur, die gleich sich thätig beweist, wann seine Existenz gesichert ist.

statement is not born of mere fancy but is the fruit of a revolutionizing experience. Goethe had come to the Strassburg cathedral a determined opponent of the confusing caprice of Gothic ornamentation, his mind full of the current prejudice against this style of architecture with all its popular erroneous associations of "undefined, disordered, unnatural, overloaded." But as he contemplated it, the majestic grandeur of Steinbach's great work grew upon him until his eyes were opened and he understood its secret and grasped the fundamental unity and necessity of its countless detail. The extension of the idea of beauty which the experience meant for Goethe and the inclusive definition of art and beauty impliedly resulting from it are most significant. For with it he takes issue in the great debate to which we have referred, regarding the nature of beauty, its relation to expression and the practical problems that necessarily were involved.

That Goethe's essay on "Gothic architecture" is not to be taken as an "Absagebrief" to Winckelmann is clear from his tribute to the "highest beauty" of classic art. But in its main emphasis the striking opposition is undeniable. Winckelmann has started from abstract beauty, supplementing it by a graded intrusion of the expressive, which, though necessary to the beautiful, increases as true beauty diminishes. We have seen the attitude which Lessing and Herder assumed toward the problem. Goethe's point of departure is the idea of the characteristic as the excellent in art, that is to say the beautiful in the wider sense of the word, and it is only later that he supplements it by the limiting postulate of formal beauty. When Bosanquet refers to this essay as perhaps the most significant aesthetic utterance of the eighteenth century, he has in mind especially Goethe's defense of the "characteristic," in which he sees the germ of those ideas which were to find their expression in

Sobald er nichts zu sorgen und zu fürchten hat greift der Halbgott, wirksam in seiner Ruhe, umher nach Stoff, ihm seinen Geist einzuhauchen. Und so modelt der Wilde mit abenteuerlichen Zügen, grässlichen Gestalten, hohen Farben seine Cocos, seine Federn, und seinen Körper. Und lasst diese Bildnerey aus den willkürlichsten Formen bestehen, sie wird ohne Gestaltsverhältniss zusammenstimmen, denn eine Empfindung schuf sie zum characteristischen Ganzen.

"Diese characteristische Kunst ist nun die einzige wahre. Wenn sie aus inniger einiger, eigner, selbstständiger Empfindung um sich wirkt, unbekümmert, ja unwissend alles Fremden, da mag sie aus rauher Wildheit, oder aus gebildeter Empfindsamkeit geboren werden, sie ist ganz und lebendig. . . . Da seht ihr bey Nationen und einzelnen Menschen dann unzählige Grade. . . ."—D. j. G., II, 211, 212.

Ruskin's "Stones of Venice" and which he considers the central idea of modern aesthetics.¹

This defense of the characteristic in art is a necessary complement of Goethe's enthusiastic description of the Gothic cathedral clearly penned in direct and conscious opposition to the narrow and effeminate doctrine of Sulzer, whose *Wörterbuch der schönen Künste und Wissenschaften* has already been referred to as typical of popular aesthetic literature of the time. In this work the author had given the following definition of Gothic, a definition with which Goethe was in full agreement before coming to Strassburg:

Das Gothische ist überhaupt ein ohne allen Geschmack gemachter Aufwand auf Werke der Kunst, denen es nicht am Wesentlichen, auch nicht immer am Grossen und Prächtigen, sondern am Schönen, am Angenehmen und am Feinen fehlt. . . . Darum nennt man nicht nur die von den Gothen aufgeführten plumpen, sondern auch die abentheuerlichen und mit tausend unnützen Zierathen überladenen Gebäude gothisch.

Goethe's impatient retort to this haughty rejection of Gothic architecture is a bold but consistent deduction from the premise of individualism which the young school had inscribed upon its banner and comes from the very heart of Storm and Stress. It is worthy of note in this connection that whereas, when the problem centered about Greek sculpture, it was regarded as a question of expressing the emotion of the object represented, Goethe on the other hand—and the shift of emphasis is a natural one—has in mind the expression of the artist himself in his work. When the problem is brought to the fore two decades later by Hirt the discussion again starts from Greek art and takes the first form.

Goethe was not alone in enunciating a doctrine so characteristic of the spirit of Storm and Stress. In one of his few references to formative art Lenz says:

Nach meiner Empfindung schätze ich den Charackteristischen, selbst den Carrikaturmaler zehnmal höher als den Idealischen, hyperbolisch gesprochen,

¹ Bosanquet's own definition of beauty was broadened to include the characteristic. "Among the ancients the fundamental theory of the beautiful was connected with the notions of rhythm, symmetry, harmony of parts, in short with the general formula of unity in variety. Among the moderns, we find that emphasis is laid on the idea of significance, expressiveness, the utterance of all that life contains; in general, that is to say: on the conception of the characteristic. If these elements are reduced to a common denominator, there suggests itself as a comprehensive definition of the beautiful, 'that which has characteristic or individual expressiveness for sense-perception or imagination, subject to the conditions of general or abstract expressiveness in the same medium.'"

denn es gehört zehnmal mehr dazu eine Figur mit eben der Genauigkeit und Wahrheit darzustellen, mit der das Genie sie erkennt, als zehn Jahre an einem Ideal der Schönheit zu zirkeln, das endlich doch nur in dem Hirn des Künstlers, der es hervorgebracht, ein solches ist.¹

With somewhat more restraint and with an artistic judgment matured by long and sympathetic study in the gallery at Düsseldorf, Wilhelm Heinse takes up the defense of the characteristic against the pseudo-classical tradition. In reply to the argument that the copying of Greek statues by young artists is done, not on account of the significant, but on account of the beautiful form which is seldom or never to be found in nature, he says: "There is no genuine form without significance; whoever does not understand its significance does not appreciate the form and much less can he make it his own." Sulzer-Gebing refers to this declaration of Heinse as containing the aesthetics of Storm and Stress in a nut-shell. "Jede Form ist lebendig," Heinse says in the same letter, "und es gibt eigentlich keine abstrakte." "Alle Schönheit entspringt aus Art und Charakter, so wie jeder Baum aus seinem Keim wächst."

A necessary corollary to the principle of the characteristic and individual was the renewed insistence on the right and duty of national expression in art. In his panegyric of Erwin von Steinbach, Goethe had pointed to the Strassburg cathedral as a brilliant example of the characteristic art which he advocated. But it was not only the expression of Erwin's own personality, it sprang from the genius of his race; it was—and there is a ring of pride in the words—it was German architecture. We have here not two different ideals, but a single one, for art cannot be genuinely individual without at the same time reflecting the artist's milieu, without being national. Herder had shown in his fourth *Wäldchen* how peculiarities of Greek, Gothic, or Moorish taste were to be explained with reference to varying epochs and racial traits, thus justifying their differing ideal of beauty as expressed in their art and literature. Thus also interpreting Shakespeare as the natural and necessary product of his own country and people but a representative, in a larger sense, of the whole Germanic race, Herder places him beside Sophocles in greatness, opposing him to the effete classical drama of France. In the same spirit the folksongs of all lands were made the object of sympathetic study and the genesis and development of language and literature were viewed in a similar light. It was but another step to the exhortation that Germans cease once and for all their imita-

¹ *Werke*, II, 212.

tion of foreign models and give expression in literature and art to the German spirit, to their own innermost selves. If Herder failed to apply the principle of individuality and nationality as fearlessly and consistently to art as to language and literature, the young enthusiasts of Storm and Stress, less under the influence of the classical doctrine of Winckelmann and Lessing, did not hesitate to carry them out in relation to architecture and plastic art. We have already seen how Goethe found in the Gothic cathedral a characteristically German product. In his essay "Nach Falkonet und über Falkonet" he praises Rembrandt and Rubens for depicting in their paintings not borrowed types but the men and women of their own land. Merck undertakes "Einige Rettungen für das Andenken Albrecht Dürers gegen die Sage der Kunst-Literatur." Like Rembrandt, Dürer did not represent an imaginary vision from heaven in his paintings of the Virgin. They are "Darstellungen inniger deutscher Mutterliebe." And if in his paintings in general there be somewhat of the "plumpe gemeine Natur" with which he is reproached, the reply is that he was inspired by no other human forms than those which surrounded him and he sketched faithfully the character and life of his friends and neighbors.

No less marked is the contrast with Winckelmann and the entire classicalistic tendency in Heinse's words: "Die Kunst kann sich nicht anders als nach dem Volke richten, unter welchem sie lebt." "Jedes Volk, jedes Klima hat seine eigentümliche Schönheit, seine Kost und seine Getränke; jeder arbeite für das Volk, worunter ihn sein Schicksal geworfen, und er die Jugend verlebt."

It is clear why Heinse found Winckelmann's praise of the Greeks with his doctrine of imitation so intolerable. "Chrienmacher, gelehrter Pedant," "Schwärmer," are terms he impatiently applies to the great classicist.¹ He says:

Selbst das menschliche Geschlecht, ist kein sinnliches Ganze für uns; nur unsere Stadt und Familie. Ein Künstler der Menschen sinnlich vorstellen will, kann sie also nur aus seiner Nation nehmen. Mit mathematischen metaphysischen Menschen hat er nichts zu schaffen, denn diese sind weder für Auge noch Hand sinnlich. Unsere Nachahmung der Antiken wenn wir ihre Gestalten und in vieler Rücksicht auch die Form ihrer Glieder und Körper nachahmen, ist eine offene Albernheit folglich, da die Leiber der Griechen und Römer für uns gar nicht mehr sinnlich und ganz aus unserm Gesichtskreis hinaus sind.²

¹ Nachlass Heft 55, Jessen, p. 223.

² Nachlass Heft 17, Jessen, p. 216. See also Jessen, pp. 74, 75.

We have briefly touched before upon another problem, namely the question as to the place of the ugly in art. While Lessing would admit the ugly in poetry, he maintains that painting, as a fine art, must not express it.¹ Since its effect is unpleasant and pleasure must be the chief aim of all fine art, it must be entirely excluded.² Herder agrees with Lessing and Winckelmann that in the representation of human and divine forms the ancients avoided, wherever possible, disproportion or distortion in passion or suffering. But he refuses to include under the definition of the ugly and to exclude anything that is represented as occupying its natural place and performing its natural function. As such anything in nature may properly be the object of art and was so considered by the ancients.³

With such careful limitations as these young Goethe has little patience. In his essay on Gothic architecture,⁴ he justifies the inclusion in art even of the rude creative efforts of the savage, not because he produced "beautiful" things but because he obeyed an instinctive creative impulse. If art is not a process of selective imitation but a creative process, an expression of nature, it cannot omit the horrible and the ugly, for in nature good and evil, the lovely and the terrible, the great and the insignificant exist side by side.⁵ And so this new and more inclusive definition of art could not only not exclude the ugly but was logically led to justify it as a corollary of the beautiful.

Wilhelm Heinse is no less bold in carrying out the individualistic premise. In direct reference to Lessing's restriction he says: "Wenn ich ein Gemälde nicht mit dem ganzen Inhalt mir vorstellen kann so soll ich mit meinem leeren Haupt etwas andres anschauen."⁶ And again:

Bei mehreren (Figuren) zur Darstellung einer Begebenheit kann und muss er zuweilen gar die Hässlichkeit abbilden. . . . Die mehrsten Begebenheiten in der Welt sind ein Kampf zwischen Tugend und Laster. Soll er das Laster schön darstellen? und ist er deswegen ein Kothmaler, wenn er es hässlich darstellt? Hässlichkeit verändert hier seinen Namen und wird zur Schönheit der Kunst.⁷

In describing the *Laokoön* he writes again with Lessing in mind:

Überspannung, Schreien zum Verzerren geht aus der Natur heraus und kann bloss deswegen nicht mehr schön sein, und doch zeigt mir den Fall, wo es

¹ *Laokoön*, XXIV, ed. Blümner, p. 309.

² *Werke* (Hempel), VI, 206.

³ S. W. S., VIII, 145 ff. (*Plastik* of 1770).

⁴ See p. 41.

⁵ Cf. p. 29, quotation from D. j. G., III, 473.

⁶ Nachlass Heft 23, Jessen, p. 89.

⁷ Ardinghello, *Werke*, IV; Jessen, p. 88.

philosophisch notwendig bei einem jungen schönen Körper ist, und ich will euch beweisen, dass es auch alsdenn schön ist.¹

Heinse's point of view here, like that of Goethe, is altogether at one with their fundamental principle of characteristic art.

One would scarcely expect the advocates of the characteristic in art to display anything but decided hostility to the allegorizing tendency of the day to which Winckelmann had given encouragement. The representation of abstract ideas through the human figure was of course the very antithesis of the individualistic ideal. In opposition to Winckelmann, Herder, in his *Plastik*, insists that the Greek sculptor did not represent abstractions any more than nature does so. His statues were persons with a name and an individuality of their own. The character of the god or hero was given the sculptor and to this he sought to give expression. Allegory was not excluded from Greek art to be sure, but it was limited to the less pretentious forms such as coins, urns, bas-reliefs, and sepulchral stones.² Heinse is still more emphatic in his opposition to allegory in art. In painting he will have none of it,³ and in general he considers it superfluous in art.⁴ This attitude is clearly one with his fundamental principle of the characteristic and individual.

It is not surprising to find the young individualists who passionately advocated such ideals as these refusing to be fettered by rules imposed from without. If artistic production is not a rational imitative process but a mysterious and instinctive one governed by inherent but unknown laws, if it is the characteristic and necessary expression of the artist himself, it cannot be deliberately guided by external rules or principles. Goethe speaks for all Storm and Stress when he says: "Schule und Prinzipium fesselt alle Kraft der Erkenntniss und Tätigkeit." The passionate vehemence of this protest against the imposition of rules

¹ Heft 10, Jessen, p. 90.

² *Werke*, S.W.S., IX, 78 ff; Haym, II, 72.

³ Jessen, p. 7.

⁴ Jessen, p. 217, Nachlassheft 17. "Allegorie ist der bildenden Kunst gar ausserwesentlich; weder Formen noch Ausdruck hat dabei viel zu schaffen; sie ist eine Kinderei aus der Schule des Marino und seiner Nachfolger. Höchstens kann sie nur im Notfall gebraucht werden wie Pasquille, bei Gelegenheiten wo man geheim sein, verdeckt etwas sagen muss, gerade wir der Gebrauch der Hieroglyphen. Und dann ist sie doch nicht für die Nachwelt, wer will das willkürliche Zeug verstehen? Im Grunde ist jede Allegorie ein Widerspruch, eine sinnliche Unsinnlichkeit, ein Zwiespalt, etwas für den Sinn, was bloss für den Geist sein soll, Schlangen und Tauben gepaart. Sie machen deswegen auch fast nie Effekt, denn der Sinn, das Auge kann sie nie recht geniessen."

from without is not the mere unreasoning caprice of excessive individualism. It is not merely a negative but a positive attitude, of a piece with their whole conception of art. To be sure, such rejection of all rules was disastrous to mediocre talent, but real genius could boast with impunity as did Young "that crutches are a needful aid to the lame though an impediment to the strong." The artist felt within himself a something that made such aid from without unnecessary. "Das Zusammenwerfen der Regeln gibt keine Ungebundenheit," says Goethe in the *Brieftasche*¹ and the justification of that claim which he gives in the same essay is of the first importance in the aesthetics of Storm and Stress. It is time, says the writer, to cease talking about the external form of dramatic works, about their length, their unities, their beginning, and their end and all that. There is another form, an inward one, that determines the outward. If more of our would-be authors had the feeling for this inward form which includes within itself all forms, we would be spared many "verschobene Geburten des Geistes." They would then not attempt to make a drama out of every tragic occurrence or work over every novel into a play. The relation between content and form is not a mechanical or accidental one but organic and necessary. In the material itself inheres the principle that determines its proper and natural expression. It is not a matter of rules but of feeling and "wem's nicht gegeben wird, wird's nicht erjagen." We are reminded of what is said of the builder of the Strassburg Cathedral, whose great work stands as the expression of his inborn feeling of beauty and truth and proportion.²

In this theory of the inward form which bears such a vital relation to the whole organic conception of art, and which Goethe here develops in its relation to dramatic composition, it is again an idea of Shaftesbury's that is appropriated and developed. "All things in the world are united," says the English philosopher in his essay *The Moralists*, "for as the branch is united with the tree, so is the tree as immediately with the earth, air and water which feed it. . . . The whole is a system, complete, according to one simple, consistent and uniform design." As there is harmony and proportion in the universe, so there should be in the actions of men. This same harmony rules also in the realm of beauty and there too is a spiritual principle. If this is lacking there can be only dead forms. We have here not purely an aesthetic idea but at the same time an ethical one. The art that is to represent man must grasp the ruling spiritual principle of human nature, the "inward form" of the

¹ D. J. G., III, 687.

² *Ibid.*, II, 212.

man, in order correctly to represent him. Otherwise the result will be merely a copy of externals. It is in support of the thesis that a great poet must also be a good and worthy man that he says: "The moral artist who can thus imitate the creator, and is thus knowing in the inward form and structure of his fellow-creature, will hardly, I presume, be found unknowing in himself, or at a loss in those numbers which make the harmony of a mind. For knowing is mere dissonance and disproportion."¹

In a characteristic letter to Herder, dated Wetzlar, 1772, Goethe writes: "Seit vierzehn Tagen lese ich Eure 'Fragmente' zum erstenmal; ich brauche Euch nicht zu sagen was sie mir sind. Dass ich Euch, von den Griechen sprechenden, meist erreichte, hat mich ergötzt, aber doch ist nichts wie eine Götterscheinung über mich herabgestiegen, hat mein Herz und Sinn mit warmer heiliger Gegenwart durch und durch belebt, als das wie Gedank' und Empfindung den Ausdruck bildet. So innig hab' ich das genossen."²

The thought that called forth the enthusiasm of young Goethe was one indeed calculated to appeal to the new school. It was essentially but another phase, a new application, of the principle that we have just been discussing—that of inward form, of the determination of outward expression from within. That thought and feeling create and form their expression in language, a relation similar to that between soul and body—these ideas of Herder which frequently occur in his earlier writings, are again developed in the essay on the origin of language with which his mind was occupied at the time of his sojourn in Strassburg. That the thought impressed Goethe but little at that time may have been due to its being obscured by the polemic against the divine origin of language in which he felt little interest. Yet in this essay, as Haym says, is found "der ganze Herder"; it breathes the spirit of Storm and Stress.

Language maintains Herder in his *Preisschrift*, is an image of the progress of the human spirit, it has had a development parallel to that of the individual man and of the race. Thus neither the language of an individual nor of a people is a finished product, but a living thing, capable of change and development. No "Sprachmeisterei," therefore, can be tolerated. If language can and must be the expression of man's innermost self, it follows that every language must "mit jedem neuen Autor, ja mit jedem Kopfe, der neuen Ton in die Gesellschaft bringt, sich neu bilden oder missbilden." Every original mind has the right to a language of his own corresponding to his own individuality, unfettered by

¹ *Soliloquy*, p. 151.

² D. j. G., I, 309.

the rules of pedantic grammarians. It is in the poetry of the childhood of the race, in the folksong, that Herder finds the realization of his ideal. If his young disciples of Storm and Stress did not develop the thought in theory, the *Geniestil* offers plentiful evidence that they carried it out in practice in no half-hearted way.

The working out of the individualistic ideal in dramatic theory as found in Lenz's "Anmerkungen" may well find a place here. Like Goethe in his *Shakespepererede* he insists on the characters and not the action being given first importance. Starting from Aristotle's Poetics, which he treats with waggish disrespect, he accepts, as we have seen, the formula of imitation but only to reinterpret it into the broader sense of original creation. Aristotle had defined tragedy as the imitation of an action. Here Lenz wholly disagrees—it is not the imitation of an action, but of man. The Aristotelian definition is justified only by the ancient view of life, which regarded fate as the great fact back of all. The emotion which the Greek poet sought to evoke was servile fear of the gods and the plot was therefore the essential factor. In modern comedy, to be sure, action may well be the main consideration, but as for tragedy, public taste in our age and land will not have it so. It is interested, not in events, but in character. The purpose of modern tragedy, therefore, is not to represent marvelous events but marvelous personages. The characters are the source of the action, they contain the plot within themselves. "Es ist die Rede von Charakteren, die sich ihre Begebenheiten erschaffen, die selbständig und unveränderlich die ganze grosse Maschine selbst drehen." The hero alone is the key to his own destinies. The events are not a matter of the author's caprice but grow, as it were, out of the characters.

Consequently, all the discussion about the three unities is quite without meaning. You may name a hundred of them if you will—there is, after all, but one, the unity of character. In the modern tragedy "fabula est una si circa unum sit." But this unity must be felt by poet and audience and not classified. The writer characteristically apologizes for his attempt to explain the inexplicable. "Es ist so eine verdriessliche Sache, von Dingen zu schwatzen, die sich nur sehen und fühlen lassen, über die nichts gesagt sein will."¹ "Ach mir, das ich die Geheimnisse unserer Kunst verraten muss, den Flor wegziehen, der ihren Reitz so schön und so schamhaft in seine Falten zurückborg, und doch vielleicht noch zu wenig verraten habe."²

¹ *Werke*, II, 229.

² *Ibid.*, p. 217.

From such a principle as that just enunciated follows naturally Lenz's decided aversion for the French classic drama. Slavishly observing, as it does, the three unities, it has no other merit than the construction of the plot, which is but an arbitrary combination of events without organic unity. And so the play does not reflect nature but the author's own self. Voltaire's heroes are all free-thinkers, Corneille's all Senecas. The arbitrarily constructed plot has its basis in the whim of the author and not in the characters. The tiresome monotony that results is the very antithesis of nature with all her wealth of variety. It is nature alone, Lenz maintains, that determines the variety of characters and events in the world and in the drama as well.

Shakespeare's historical plays are such dramas of character as Lenz has described. The great poet takes the mummy of the old hero embalmed by his biographers, breathes his own spirit into him, and he steps forth from the books of history and lives again with us.¹ Goethe in his *Shakespererede* gives expression to the same thought. It is the characters that are of first importance in his dramas and they are nature itself. And again agreeing with Lenz he says: "Seine Plane sind, nach dem gemeinen Stil zu reden, keine Plane, aber seine Stücke drehen sich alle um den geheimen Punckt (den noch kein Philosoph gesehen und bestimmt hat) in dem das Eigentümliche unsres Ichs, die prätenderte Freiheit unsres Wollens, mit dem notwendigen Gang des Ganzen zusammenstösst." He, too, while appreciating the historical justification of the unities in the Greek tragedy, rejects them for himself and expresses the same contempt for the classic drama of France.

D. THE PURPOSE OF ART

During the century preceding the Storm and Stress movement no clear distinction was made between the ethical and the aesthetic. The doctrine of beauty as the representation of perfection was carried over into the moral field and art was spoken of as a means of ennobling the life of the senses. This tendency is especially marked in English philosophy. Addison and Steele discuss aesthetic questions because they conceive of taste as influencing social morality. Thus Shaftesbury, Harris, Burke, Hume, all consider art an agency for ennobling the whole inner being. Gottsched, the German apostle of French classicism, while regarding imitation of nature as the first principle of poetic composition, considered its final purpose to be to give pleasure—and to do good. The Swiss also spoke of a moral aim of poetry, beside that of exciting the

¹ *Schriften*, II, 227.

imagination and the emotions. Lessing agrees with Winckelmann that beauty is the highest law of Greek art but adds that its ultimate purpose is to give pleasure. Sulzer, notwithstanding Goethe's scornful criticism, had in his aesthetic theory much that went beyond the philistinism of current discussion. He did not advocate, as Goethe would have it seem,¹ a merely didactic purpose of art in its crudest form, but maintained that aesthetics should demand a higher content in art. Yet all in all, as we have said, the trend in contemporary literature and aesthetics was toward a strong emphasis on the ethical purpose of all art.

Herder, in his *Wäldchen* against Klotz, attacks the moralizing critics and all didactic poetry. He objects to the common confusion of ethics and aesthetics and insists that a poet's works must be judged according to the laws of beauty, not according to moral laws. The poet seeks to deceive and by deception to give pleasure, not directly to teach and to reform. From this starting-point he launches into a discussion of morals, and protests in genuine Storm and Stress spirit against the current doctrine. Distinguishing between the natural and the conventional sense of shame and virtue, he places the morality of the heart above merely traditional and conventional standards. Thus applying the principle of individualism in the realm of ethics, he maintains that conceptions of modesty and propriety could not be identical in different nations or times, or even in individuals. And since these conceptions differ in accordance with varying character, the critic must not judge all writers from the same point of view.² In the first version of his Shakespeare essay he speaks in a still more disparaging tone of the "abgezogene Moral, leere 'locos communes' und Klassifikationen, die auf hundert Fälle angewandt auf keinen ganz passen."³

Herder thus clearly approaches the denial of any universal code of moral laws which is characteristic of Storm and Stress. The "ganzer Kerl" the "Kraftgenie" would brook no conventional restraints, but demanded full exercise of all his powers, intellectual and physical—a right he willingly granted to others. No one must either act himself or judge others according to any general conception or rules but always with regard for the peculiar circumstances of each particular case—an application of the empirical principle as well as a consequence of that of individualism.

If art is to represent life as it is and if morals are an individual affair, there is only one logical attitude toward the didactic purpose

¹ D. j. G., II, 474.

² See Weissenfels, *Goethe im Sturm u. Drang*, p. 143.

³ S. W. S., V, 233.

in art. In one of his early works, *Don Sylvio von Rosalva*, Wieland had demanded literary works "welche die Menschen mit ihren Liedenschaften und Thorheiten, in ihrer wahren Gestalt, weder vergrößert noch verkleinert, abschilderten und von ihren Handlungen diesen Firniss wegwischten, womit Stolz, Selbstbetrug oder geheime Absichten sie zu überziehen pflegen." Such books were to take the place of the great mass of wretched and mediocre moralizing productions, of the "längst ausgedroschenes moralisches Stroh." This utterance of Wieland in his first period was quite in the spirit of the *Genies* and even in the *Mitschuldigen* of his Leipzig period Goethe works out just such ideas—perhaps under the direct influence of Wieland. His reaction in a review in the *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen* to a product of the same author's later period *Der goldene Spiegel* is extremely interesting and characteristic. He finds three stages in Wieland's authorship. In the first the scene is the Empyreum, and the characters, as emanations from the first source of good and evil, revolve about platonic ideas. In the second period he comes down to earth, the *dramatis personae* are real human beings, neither altogether good nor altogether evil. The manners of the eighteenth century are transposed to the soil of Greece or to fairyland. This is "das männliche Alter," in which falls the writing of the *Agathon* and the *Musarion*. These works were criticized by some because of their realism, by others because they subordinated truth to style and "die eklen Moralisten" refused to let their daughters read them. Such criticism seems to have led Wieland to change his tone and to conclude his literary career as a moralist. It is to this last period that *Der goldene Spiegel* belongs. The reviewer refers sarcastically to "die weise Art, womit er die Speise austheilt und zubereitet." It is all "Inscription, Satz, Lehre, Moral, mit goldenen Buchstaben an die Wand geschrieben, und die Figuren sind herumgemahlt." Such idealizing, such "faking" of life for the purpose of conveying a moral lesson is worthy only of contempt. In human life there is no light without shadow, no day without night, and in representing it, the scene must always include vice with virtue, and sorrow with happiness. One side of life must not be concealed.¹

Apropos of Sulzer's criticism of Wieland's *Agathon* and *Musarion*, to which Goethe refers approvingly in this connection because they have no moralizing tendency, Merck says in a review in the same journal: "Über die Moralität seiner Schriften ist der Verfasser des *Agathon* und der *Musarion* bei allen gesunden Köpfen längst gerechtfertigt und

¹ D. j. G., II, 455.

Kenner des menschlichen Herzens mögen entscheiden, ob eine Leitung und Verfeinerung des Gefühls durch Blumenpfade einer lachenden Landschaft nicht geschwinder zum Ziel führe als die kürzeste mathematische Linie des moralischen Raisonnements."¹

The logical and consistent Storm and Stress attitude toward the moralizing tendency in art could not be more clearly expressed. Literature must represent life as it is and not invent plots or characters to suit some didactic purpose. It must not hesitate to picture the dark and coarse and brutal side of human nature. Goethe's fine artistic sense saved him in practice from the extreme of naturalism to which such a doctrine, if consistently carried out, might lead. There are here and there, to be sure, strong echoes of the realistic tone of his early dramatic effort *Die Mitschuldigen*, as for instance in certain scenes of *Götz* and *Faust* and in the *Jahrmarktsfest zu Plundersweilen*, but his predominating tendency remains throughout "dem Wirklichen eine poetische Gestalt zu geben."—"Sieh lieber, was doch alles Schreibens Anfang und Ende ist, die Reproduktion der Welt um mich, durch die inner Welt die alles packt, verbindet, neuschafft, knetet und in eigner Manier wieder hinstellt. . . ."² What Goethe says here is, of course, true of all real art and this very selective, recreative process is the test of the true artist. Gerstenberg, Lenz, Klinger, Leisewitz, and Wagner clearly show in some of their dramas to what coarseness and vulgarity, often descending to frank obscenity, the same premise could lead when controlled by less of the true artist's sense.

For Goethe literary production was primarily a means of self-expression, of relieving by a kind of poetic confession his pent-up emotions, of freeing himself from a burdening problem of conduct. What he said of the lyric poets of ancient Greece was true of himself: "Die Natur trieb sie zum Singen wie den Vogel in der Luft." "Wenn ich jetzt nicht Dramas schriebe, ginge ich zu Grund," he writes to Countess Stolberg, and in the same letter he speaks of his works as "die aufbewahrten Freuden und Leiden meines Lebens."³ Merck seems to have his friend Goethe in mind when he says about certain unnamed contemporary writers: "Ihre Schriften geben wirklich der allgemeinen Denk- und Empfindungsart eine andere Richtung. Aber man frage sie auf ihr Gewissen, ob sie auf diesen Eindruck gearbeitet, ihn zuweilen nur vorhergesehen oder geahndet haben? Sie arbeiten an ihrem Werk aus Liebe zu ihm und sie hätten es gefertigt, wenn es auch nie aufgestellt worden wäre. Es war Drang, sich ihrer Ideen zu entledigen ohne zu

¹ D. J. G., II, 411.

² *Ibid.*, III, 32.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71

bedenken, was diese Entledigung nun im Ganzen für Fermentation verursachen möchte."¹

And such was the ideal of the young *Genies* even though they expressed it less clearly and fell short of its attainment. Longing for action in the great life of the world, chafing under the oppressive laws and governments that crushed all initiative, they found an outlet for their impatient striving in dramatic composition. In this fictitious world, at least, the "Grosser Kerl," the "Kraftgenie," could have full sway, unhampered by narrowing restrictions of law or convention. And as such a means of self-expression these dramas could not but be a protest against the conditions they detested—the tyranny of authority, the servility of the oppressed, the philistinism and pedantry of pretended learning. That Goethe considered his *Götz* as such a protest is evident from the motto of the first version: "Das Unglück ist geschehen, das Herz des Volks ist in den Koth getreten und keiner edlen Begierde mehr fähig."² A note by Lenz, probably to Goethe, found in F. H. Jacobi's papers, is to the point in this connection:

Ich habe viel in der Societät zu überwinden, auf einer Seite ist's Unglauben, Zerrüttenheit, vages Geschnarch von Belleliteratur, wo nichts dahinter ist als Nesselblüthen, auf der andern Seite leise Schneckenmoralphilosophie die ihren grossmütterlichen Gang fortkriecht, dass ich oft drüber die Geduld verlieren möchte. Da konnte *Götz* nicht durchdringen, der Beiden gleich abspricht. Daher fing ich an ut vates den Leuten Standpunkt ihrer Religion einzustecken, das itzt unter vielen Schwürigkeiten vollendet ist; die Erfolge wird die Zeit lehren.

How far removed such virile protests, expressed through the realistic portrayal of contemporary society, were from the feeble moralizing literature of the day is sufficiently clear from the indignant criticism of the "eklen Moralisten" that these dramas were deliberately produced with the intention of corrupting society and seducing virtue. If no timidity is evident in the presentation of the seamy side of life in them, their authors sometimes showed less courage in the face of such attacks. Goethe repeatedly expresses his disdain for public opinion. He did not write to please the fickle taste of possible readers and he cared little whether what he wrote helped or injured his reputation. Others were less disregardful of hostile criticism and in their eagerness to clear themselves against such base charges, were led to put themselves in the seemingly equivocal position of maintaining that they had aimed to serve

¹ *Stahr*, p. 345.

² D. j. G., II, 44.

the very moral purpose their critics charged them with opposing. However, it is to be noted that they have nowhere in mind the petty, pedantic correcting of individual faults; it is the social wrongs in the large that concern them and they strive to gain their end by depicting life as it really is.

In Wagner's translation of Mercier occurs the following significant passage:

Eine der grössten Hindernisse aller Wirkungen eines Gedichts ist, wenn der Leser die darin vorkommenden Rollen für sich oder für andere austheilt. Da ist ein leidenschaftlicher Leser, der kein Urtheil fällen kann und dem sind die trefflichsten Gedichte die gefährlichsten. Er sucht die Erfahrungen nachzumachen auf Kosten seiner Vernunft und Moralität. So müssen oft die herrlichsten Produkte des menschlichen Geistes das Licht scheuen, um nicht Schaden anzurichten. Ich habe den Torso eines Prometheus von Goethe gelesen, das vielleicht das grösste war was er schrieb, ich zweifle aber das er ihn darf drucken lassen, so lang das deutsche Publikum moralische Abhandlungen und Gedichte zu vermischen schwach genug ist. Dieser Prometheus ist ein Götterverächter, wie er in der Geschichte war und seyn musste. Ihn fromm zu machen hiesse der medicäischen Venus einen Rosenkranz in die Hände geben. . . . Wehe aber dem Menschen der sich in eine wortreiche Widerlegung seiner Worte und Handlungen einlassen wollte; eben dadurch beweist er, dass er Lust hätte, ein Prometheus zu werden. Wann wird man einmal anfangen, mit fester Seele bey den Meisterwerken unsrer Künstler vorüberzugehen und sich ungestört von ihnen entzücken zu lassen, ohne sich Leiden-schaften zu seinem Verderben zu überlassen?

The epidemic of suicides that is reported to have followed in the train of Goethe's *Werther* is a most striking illustration of this tendency to reproduce fiction in life of which Wagner complains. And we are not surprised that an author who shows such anxious consideration for the moral consequences of his literary efforts sets about making a revision of his *Kindermörderin* in deference to offended public taste, taking care that even its new title *Eva Humbrecht oder ihr Mutter, merkt's euch!* should clearly indicate its intent. He complains that the public failed to realize the high moral aim (!) of the first scene. "Schmutzige Ideen zu erwecken," he says elsewhere "ist nur dann erlaubt wenn man dadurch gewinnt, das Laster verhasst zu machen, hässlich und abscheulich zu schildern. Wer ohne Noth und Hoffnung, hier und da einen zu bessern, sich jenes erlaubt ist ein Polisson, der nicht verdient in Gesellschaft gelitten zu werden."¹

¹ Quoted by Schmidt in *H. L. Wagner*, p. 645.

Klinger feels a like need of justifying himself against the intention of seducing virtue. In a letter to the *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen* he writes:

Was ich über den Zweck meines Dramas (das Leidende Weib) sagen will, ist dieses: Ich wollte den Werth der Unschuld, das Heiligtum des Orts eines anderen, meinen Lesern durch Beispiel und Handlung, nicht durch Geschwätz anschaulich machen. Ich wollte dass sie das fühlen sollten und diese Lehre daraus ziehen: wie sehr sich Verlust desselben und Beschimpfung desselben durch Reue und Strafe rächen. Konnte ich das nicht, so ist mein Unvermögen Schuld und keine böse Absicht. . . . Da aber mein Zweck so augenscheinlich im Stücke liegt und dasselbe mit Reue der Verbrecher anfängt und mit ihrer Strafe endet. . . . Was mich kränkte und was die bitterste, hässlichste Lüge ist, die einem Menschen nachgesagt worden, ist der Vorwurf, ich habe Unschuld verführen wollen.¹

In a letter to Sophie von la Roche, Lenz had asked for her frank opinion of his play "Die Soldaten," a copy of which he inclosed. Her criticism was not altogether favorable and while admitting its justification he begs her to remember that his public is the entire nation and that he can no more exclude the mob than he could the people of taste and culture. There are some things in real life which cannot and ought not to please in dramatic presentation, but in order to make clear to the common man how abhorrent vice is and what are its results, it is necessary to portray life as it actually is. "Ich will aber nichts als dem Verderbniss der Sitten entgegenarbeiten, das von den glänzenden bis zu den niedrigen Ständen hinabschleicht und wogegen diese die Hilfsmittel nicht haben können als jene."²

Schiller, in his years of Storm and Stress, has little to say about any of the branches of art except the drama, and his essays on this subject are chiefly devoted to a discussion of the purpose of dramatic art. In his *Vorrede zu den Räubern*, *Über das gegenwärtige deutsche Theater*, and *Die Schaubühne als moralische Anstalt betrachtet* he frankly maintains that the theater should have the end in view of influencing public morals. The stage is "ein offener Spiegel des menschlichen Lebens." Life, with its vice and virtue is, as it were, concentrated on the stage. The theater, says Schiller, borrowing a statement of Du Bos, satisfies the natural human impulse to activity at a time when mind and body are tired and unable to do their work. Here it has to combine the education of the heart and mind with entertainment. It is the ally of law and religion and extends its influence beyond theirs, for it can set up examples of

¹ Rieger, pp. 378-79.

² *Euphorion*, III.

vice and virtue and attack follies which religion and law cannot touch. Even if the effect is not to keep us from vice and folly, we at least learn to know human nature and so be on guard against them in others. It prepares us for changes of fortune and teaches us to be more just and tolerant toward the unhappy and unfortunate. Besides teaching tolerance and humanity the theater works toward the improvement of education and the bettering of relations between rulers and subjects (*Volksgegenstände*) and may have a decided influence toward creating the national sentiment that makes a nation. In this way the stage may combine recreation and amusement with moral and intellectual improvement. And, finally, when the spectator, completely illusioned, forgetting his joys and sorrows and cares, remembers and feels only that he is a human being—then the supreme effect of the drama has been attained.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

A. SUMMARY

Storm and Stress is determined in its principal manifestations by a reaction to the narrowness and pedantry of the German Enlightenment. In its protest against the speculative tendency of the *Aufklärung* it was led to a firm and constant insistence on the principle of experience as the basis of all theory. If, in their hatred of cut-and-dried system and minute analysis, the *Genies* did not arrange their ideas on art in an elaborate scheme, yet a careful comparative study of their utterances on such questions shows a marked conviction and substantial agreement with regard to the more important problems of practical aesthetics.

A deepening and vitalizing of the concept of nature makes the old popular rationalistic formula utterly inadequate to express the new ideal of art that follows from it. Art is not an intellectual operation but a creative process, instinctive and mysterious, and the artist, like the great universal Spirit, is a maker, a creator, not an imitator. This being so, his work partakes of the nature of the created work of God, it has a necessary organic unity. External form, be it in the various forms of art or in language, cannot be given primary consideration or regarded as a thing by itself apart. The outward expression springs necessarily from the content, is inherent in and determined by it. Here no rule or model, but only innate artistic sense can be the guide.

While generally averse to a philosophic analysis of the concept, Storm and Stress cannot evade in practice the moot question as to what really constitutes beauty. Denying the existence of an abstract ideal of beauty, the new school does not leave the opposite pole of expressiveness to be inferred as its own ideal, but gives it clear and emphatic enunciation. This characteristic art—the expression of profound, original, independent feeling—carries with it a significant broadening of the concept of the beautiful to include the whole wide range of the creations of that “*bildende Natur*” common to the untutored savage and the man of culture.

Again, from a subjective viewpoint, beauty is altogether a relative thing. Herder finds that the concept of beauty, far from being innate

and universal, is a slowly acquired one, that it is a product of environment and experience and hence differs in individuals and races and epochs. According to Heinse the appreciation of beauty is dependent on sensuous experience. Only that is beautiful to savage or civilized man which appeals to his senses, he can only feel that in art which he has felt in his own life.

The individualism of Storm and Stress could have little patience with the current didactic tendency in literature and aesthetics. Nor was the idealizing or "faking" of life for the purpose of inculcating a moral lesson in harmony with the realism demanded by the emphasis on the principle of experience. Nevertheless, this bold assertion of individualism and the realistic portrayal of actual life, especially in the drama, could not but be a protest against social wrong in a larger aspect. That it was deliberately intended as such is stoutly maintained against those who accused them of a desire to corrupt public morals.

B. RELATION TO EARLY ROMANTICISM

The earliest Romantic product bearing directly on questions of aesthetics is Wackenroder's *Herzensergiessungen eines Kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*. In this work there appear, with a strong mystical coloring, characteristic Storm and Stress ideas. Still more emphatically than they, Wackenroder rejects everything that smacks of dogma and system. Still more averse than they to formulate his views on art, he is led only to wondering contemplation and adoration. "Harret wie bey dem Gebet auf die seligen Stunden, da die Gunst des Himmels euer Inneres mit höherer Offenbarung erleuchtet; nur dann wird eure Seele sich mit den Werken der Künstler zu einem Ganzen vereinigen."¹ Aesthetics becomes for him one with religion, the artist a saint, his work a miracle, the contemplation of it an act of worship. If Storm and Stress had insisted on the fundamental place of feeling in art, to Wackenroder feeling is everything. What he calls *Einfühlen*, a kind of mystic union with the work of art and with nature and the universe, takes the place of all definitions.² Storm and Stress had upheld the ideal of national art, an art that reflects the peculiarities of climate and soil and race. In the Gothic cathedral of Erwin von Steinbach, Goethe had recognized an art distinctively and essentially German. Wackenroder goes still farther in his enthusiastic defense of medieval art against the pre-

¹ *Ullrich*, p. 90.

² *Ibid.*, p. 91.

judge of a generation still under the spell of Winckelmann and Lessing. "Nicht bloss unter italienischem Himmel, unter majestatischen Kuppeln und korinthischen Säulen, auch unter spitzgewölbten, krausverzierten Gebäuden und gotischen Türmen wächst wahre Kunst hervor."² Dürer is upheld as the typical representative of a truly national art now no longer understood or appreciated. Disgusted, like Winckelmann, with the superficiality and commonplaceness of everyday life, he seeks like him refuge in the idealized world of a past age and there alone finds the salvation of contemporary art. But here the similarity ceases. Winckelmann in his passionate adoration of classic art is himself confessedly a Greek and a pagan at heart. Wackenroder's enthusiasm for medieval art has not only a distinctly national bias but derives its inspiration largely from a deep Christian mysticism. Storm and Stress, too, had turned away with sarcastic disdain from its own generation, but it was in nature itself with all the wealth of new content they had given the conception that they placed their hope for the future of art.

The organic conception of Storm and Stress which Goethe had given a new and fuller content after his Italian journey and which his friend Moritz had developed in his essay *Über die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen* became the very cornerstone of Romantic theory. So Schelling conceives of nature and humanity as one great organism. He rejects Batteux's imitation of "la belle nature" and says the artist must "dem im Innern der Dinge wirksamen Naturgeist nacheifern." Wilhelm Schlegel uses the familiar comparison of the artist with Prometheus, "der den Menschen aus irdischem Ton formte und ihn mit einem von der Sonne entwandten Funken belebte." "Alle heiligen Spiele der Kunst," he has Lothario say in *Gespräch über die Poesie*, "sind nur ferne Nachbildungen von dem unendlichen Spiele der Welt, dem ewig sich selbst bildenden Kunstwerk."² The further development of the organic idea into an elaborate philosophy of nature and art cannot be discussed here.

Unlike the *Genies* and Wackenroder the Romanticists proper undertake the most subtle analysis of the emotions. Like the *Stürmer* in their eager thirst for knowledge beyond the superficial and the apparent, they, unlike them, recognize that this desire has its source in the rational faculty of man. The emphasis of the earlier generation on totality they extended to include the reason as well. Storm and Stress did not and could not have a philosopher to interpret and systematize their

¹ Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, p. 76.

² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

aspirations. The Romanticists after Wackenroder deliberately and consciously set about an interpretation of the romantic view of life and of art. They demanded men of reason, philosophers as well as men of feeling and action—the ideal of Storm and Stress. The latter in their distrust of reason had opposed experience to speculation. To Romanticism, with its recognition of the rational man the contrast had lost its force and the principle so essential in the consideration of Storm and Stress aesthetics is lost from view.

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